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# TO THE WORLD WAR

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# FROM BISMARCK TO THE WORLD WAR

## A HISTORY OF GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY 1870-1914

BY

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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Miss Annie Elizabeth Adams, who had undertaken the translation of this book, died on 7th February, 1926, when the work of revision was still incomplete. Her long task had been complicated by the appearance of the second German edition, and the need for incorporating the important new matter contained in it. Another hand could not easily gather up the threads, and if the translation shows unevennesses, it is hoped that the reader will pardon them.

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# PREFACE

The disastrous consequences of the World War and of the Treaty of Versailles affect the whole world, but Germany most of all. Hence it is natural for us to keep on asking how did this war come about, could it have been avoided, and who is responsible for having started it? At Versailles, Germany was compelled to sign an admission of guilt because the victors required such justification for their exorbitant demands. It was necessary to convince the world that these heavy burdens were being laid upon us in the interests of public morality, not as conquered foes but as the deliberate disturbers of the peace of the world. Since then public opinion everywhere has generally believed in our guilt; only isolated voices in the enemy countries have ventured to dispute the verdict. From the historical point of view an official admission of guilt, extorted under pressure, has very little significance. In order to understand the origin of the World War, the facts must be examined from the real sources, free from all considerations of party politics. It is only when these facts lie before us, clear and significant, that it is possible to proceed to estimate their real weight and worth.

The accompanying volume is the first attempt to give a description of this kind, based on documents in the German Foreign Office, for free access to which I am deeply indebted. I need scarcely add that this is a mere beginning of the examination of this difficult problem. I have only examined those portions of the huge mass of materials which seemed to me significant for the vital points. Many matters will require—and will receive, once the publication of the Foreign Office records is completed—more exhaustive treatment in details. But even then one indispensable condition will be lacking for a final estimate, the publication of the records of the other contending Powers. Till then we may succeed in producing an accurate picture of German policy, but we must rest content with more or less well-founded surmises as to the aims and means of the other Powers.

It has been my endeavour to give a reliable picture of Germany's policy during the last decades before the war, founded on the facts as revealed in our archives.

In many places I would gladly have given sharper expression to my own views, but I have exercised no small self-restraint and have sought instead to put my reader in a position to judge for himself. Where I have stated an opinion, I have given it as my own conviction. I wish to say with emphasis that there has been no attempt in official quarters to influence my judgment or to hamper me in the choice of documents used. Had I not been assured of this condition, I would not have undertaken the work. Such being my aim, any ignoring or minimising of German faults and frailties was out of the question. I have admitted these so frankly that many compatriots may find such candour unfair. In my opinion there is no sense in disputing what is undeniable, because it is only when our ways are absolutely straightforward that we can expect and demand consideration for them from an opponent. When we calmly admit that faults have been committed we are the better able to insist that the main reproach of the enemy—the war-like aim of German policy—is absolutely unfounded and refuted by every serious study of the official facts.

Some will be surprised at seeing the plans and deeds of the enemy Powers—England especially—in so far as anything definite can be said about them, in a different light from that in which they are usually presented. But it seems to me that it is the historian's duty, in a case where the official materials on one side are meagre, not to attribute a motive unless he can supply actual proof of it. We would willingly discuss these matters with representatives of the other nations; we offer them our sources of information without reserve; but we cannot expect them to meet us in this matter if we previously accuse them, without proof, of the basest intentions. That this has happened on the other side has made it much more difficult to initiate a really effective discussion. It makes it no easier for us, however, if we commit the same fault. It is as incumbent on us as on our enemies to avoid prejudices formed under the obsession of war.

So much for my own position. This book has been written, often in anguish of heart, in the belief that it is necessary. The readers I desire, be they in Germany or elsewhere, are those who seek earnestly to see things as they really were.

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# I. BACK TO BISMARCK

After a long period of war there invariably comes a time when the claims of peace assert themselves with compelling force. In the decades before 1871 the nations of Central Europe were exhausted by almost continuous and devastating wars, from which ensued momentous changes—the unification of Italy and Germany, Austria's secession from the German league, the extension of German territory through the inclusion of Schleswig and Alsace-Lorraine, France's adoption of a Republic, and Austria's of the new constitutional form of a "Dual Monarchy," the closing of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles to warships, and the strengthening of the Christian States in the Balkan peninsula. It was of paramount importance that the nations affected by these events should have time to adapt themselves to their new conditions, to build up their internal structure, and by peaceful toil to repair the havoc in their domestic life.

Among the Great Powers, England and Russia had long outgrown their European confines; they alone at that period could really be classed as World Powers. For the British Empire with its formidable medley of races, European questions and interests were no longer of the first importance. In European politics England still adhered to the traditional point of view, viz.: that the Continental Powers should not be allowed to combine into one solid group, which would be both economically and politically a danger to the Island Empire. England still remembered the evil days after the Napoleonic wars. It suited her policy best to have two groups of approximately the same strength; both of them being thus dependent on her good-will, England became arbiter of Europe.

The decisions at the Congresses of Paris and Vienna having deprived Russia of all immediate prospect of controlling the

Straits, and postponed indefinitely free access to the Mediterranean, she turned her energies to the extension and development of her immense Asiatic empire, pushing right on to the Pacific Ocean and down to the fruitful regions of Central Asia.

England and Russia, fundamentally different in their social, domestic and political structure, were constantly drawing nearer in Asia, where England felt that Russia's advance imperilled the security of her Indian Empire and menaced her commercial interests in northern China. She dreaded, moreover, any serious disturbance of the balance of power in the Mediterranean, should Russia build a strong navy in the Black Sea and, possessing the Straits, send it at any time into the Aegean. In this world policy England and Russia were rivals, and the closer they approached each other in Asia, the deeper the hostility became. For forty years past this Anglo-Russian rivalry had dominated European policy. The statesmen of that period regarded it as an unalterable and inevitable fact of great significance which would always have to be reckoned with. The colonial possessions of the remaining European Powers were either non-existent or comparatively insignificant. The old French colonial empire had collapsed during the Napoleonic wars. The new French colonies were only in process of formation. In Algeria, in North Africa, in Senegambia and on the east coast of Indo-China, France had footholds. But it was by no means certain that she would be able to maintain them permanently and to develop them. In any case for all these states, and especially for Germany who had no colonies and whose overseas trade was then only in its infancy, purely Continental and European interests were dominant.

The supreme object of Germany's policy, which was controlled by Bismarck until 1890 in spite of various *contretemps*, was the maintenance of European peace. It was not merely stressed in the speeches and manifestoes of our leading men; it was the governing motive in the whole disposition of our policy and in the particular decisions which had to be taken. Knowledge of this has become the common property of historians since the German archives bearing on the Bismarck period have been thrown open for research, no matter what views may be held as to the great Chancellor's political conduct or even as to his intentions in particular instances.[1] Our great statesman was of the opinion that we had everything we really needed and that war, even a victorious war, did not offer any actual gain. On the north and the west our territory had actually reached and occasionally even exceeded the limits of our nationality. No thoughtful German has ever wanted to add German Switzerland or Holland to our empire. To bring the German provinces of Austria once more into our national state has seemed to many a desirable aim, and to not a few simply a matter of duty. Nevertheless it was in Catholic southern Germany that these aspirations flourished rather than in the Protestant north which had taken the leading part in the new empire. Bismarck always maintained that the inclusion of the Catholic German Austrians would strengthen the centrifugal forces within the empire; but on the other hand he considered the collapse of Austria a national danger, as the majority of the non-German territories were inhabited by a Slav population who would naturally turn to Russia if the Hapsburg monarchy were dissolved. Such an accession to Russia's power seemed to him ominous both for Germany and for Europe. Hence the maintenance of Austria-Hungary's position as a great Power became one of the corner-stones of his policy; and so long as he was at the helm and his influence persisted, all thoughts of increase of territory in the south east were barred. As a matter of fact in the north east we had already more foreign elements in our empire than was comfortable. To increase the percentage of Polish inhabitants hostile to us would have been a huge blunder. Bismarck never believed that the Baltic provinces, the ruling classes in which were German both by descent and culture, could ever again be drawn into our empire. Geographically these provinces lay too much outside our territory. The majority of their inhabitants were of a different race and were not friendly to us, while even the nobility were much too sympathetic towards Russia—where they played a big part and received special consideration—to wish for union with Germany.

These facts and considerations led Bismarck to the conclusion that we had nothing to gain even from a victorious war in

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[1] A. Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Fr. Thimme, *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914*, vols. i.-vi., a collection of Foreign Office documents. Cf. also for detailed information, Rachfahl, *Deutschland und die Weltpolitik*, vol. i. *Die Bismarcksche Ära*, Stuttgart, 1923.

Europe. Besides, our newly-created empire was, so to speak, still in process of formation; time alone would test the new arrangements and prove their worth; sharp differences in religious and social matters constituted a serious menace to us; and, finally, our budding prosperity urgently required peace. Maintenance of existing conditions and of peace had to be the cardinal point of German policy. Bismarck recognised this and acted upon it. In his *Thoughts and Recollections* he declares that his aim was to earn the confidence of the lesser and greater Powers by a peaceful, just, honest and conciliatory policy. It almost sounds like a belated palliation of his essentially Machiavellian statesmanship. Yet the further we carry our researches, the clearer is the evidence that he was only putting into words the fundamental principle of his actions.

Such being the general position of affairs at that time, what was there to disturb the peace of Europe? There were two centres of constant unrest, two territories whose temporary status was not generally recognised as the foundation of future troubles—Alsace-Lorraine and the Balkans.

At the Peace of Frankfurt, France had been compelled to renounce Alsace-Lorraine. It had been a bitter mortification to her to part with land that for well-nigh two centuries had formed an integral part of her national territory. She overlooked the fact that she had previously conquered by force these provinces from Germany. The demand for their restoration was regarded as an injustice to France and to the territory itself, whose inhabitants were not consulted. Thenceforward the great majority of the French nation regarded it as a matter of course that by some means or other this injustice should be redressed. The loss of the Saar territory in the second Treaty of Paris in 1815 had not been forgotten. Even in 1866, Napoleon III. had made an attempt to recover it. Of course the explanation of the French attitude towards Germany's "injustice" was to be found not only in the loss of territory, but also in the supersession of her dominating position in Europe: after the Prussian victories of 1866 the cry for revenge made itself heard. Anger at military defeat accentuated it. The emergence of a new military German Empire, economically superior, betokened the end of the French hegemony and wounded French pride in its most sensitive spot. Alsace-Lorraine was the outward and visible symbol of the overthrow France had suffered.

French statesmen thoroughly understood that nothing could be done in the immediate future towards realising these hopes of revenge. France's wounds must be healed, her internal affairs reorganised, her military strength brought up to a far different standard, before she could think of a new war. Well they knew that even later on a struggle of that kind could scarcely be waged single-handed with any prospect of success. Germany was steadily increasing in population and industrial wealth. The population of France was not increasing ; her ancient wealth was virtually stationary, while in actual industrial enterprise there was no comparison with Germany. Hence the need of finding allies, and of exploiting every development in the general political situation unfavourable to Germany. France's leading men were firmly convinced that her hour would come when Germany became involved in a war with a third Power. German policy had therefore to reckon that in any serious conflict with another Power, France would be against her. Therein lay the significance of the Alsace-Lorraine problem in European politics. It was not in itself an acute danger, but it was a latent and persistent threat to peace, because it was evident that in every conceivable situation it would determine France's attitude and would be an unseen factor influencing the grouping of the Powers. There were certainly men and tendencies in France who loyally accepted the conditions of the Peace of Frankfurt, who sought to repair their losses in other ways and wished to live at peace with Germany. Occasionally they were even countenanced officially. But they were always an object of suspicion to the Nationalists, regarded by them as traitors in disguise to the most sacred feelings of the French nation, and at decisive moments they could be thrust aside by an easily-roused popular agitation.

Alongside this latent peril the complex problem of the Balkans formed the acute—and ever renewed—danger to European peace. The Turks had conquered and dominated the Balkan peninsula without being able to assimilate its various nationalities. Difference of religious faith and mode of thought prevented any real co-operation with the conquered peoples. In the course of centuries the military power of Turkey had permanently declined.

The great innovations both in technique and organisation of the armies of Western Europe had passed unheeded by this people that held rigidly to tradition; and later on the attempt at imitation was purely superficial. In the nineteenth century the martial prowess of the Crescent inspired fear no longer.

Such conditions, and the spread of the Western European sense of nationality among the Christian populations of the Balkans, facilitated the ever-growing struggle for liberty of the Greeks, Serbs, Roumanians and Bulgarians against Turkish rule. The want of unity among these Christian races, their mutual jealousies, the difficulty of securing well-defined national boundaries in territories (such as Macedonia) inhabited by small groups of people of diverse origin, hindered the struggle for emancipation and enabled Turkey to keep up an obstinate resistance for years to come. The most serious feature of all was that these intricate and inter-related problems became more and more matters not merely of local but also of general European interest. The formation of an independent Serbian or Roumanian State was extremely disconcerting to Austrian statesmen, because Austrian territories held many millions of Southern Slavs and Roumanians who would naturally be more and more drawn towards adjoining States of kindred nationality; and their adhesion to Serbia and Roumania threatened sooner or later to shatter the frail fabric of the Dual Monarchy. Hence it was simply the law of self-preservation that compelled Austria, as she had not been able to prevent their creation, to keep these adjoining States strongly under her influence and to prevent any active propaganda among their compatriots within her boundaries.

Although Austria was the nearest she was not the most powerful neighbour of these Balkan nations. Bound to them through community of faith and nationality, Russia by her traditional policy was seeking to reach Constantinople; for her own interests, both domestic and military, strongly urged her to keep the entrance to the Black Sea—" the key of her house "—in her own hands or at least under her immediate control. If Serbia and Roumania fell under Austrian influence it would then be all the more imperative for Russia to secure a dominating position in Bulgaria in order to prevent the Austrian sphere of influence from extending to Constantinople and Salonica. The possibility of friction and disturbances between these two great Powers increased in direct ratio as they sought to strengthen their influence in the Balkan States.

There was yet another great Power concerned. Since the opening of the Suez Canal, Britain with her world-wide economic and imperial policy was vitally interested in the Near East, for these territories provided the quickest access to India. To control the routes herself, or at least to prevent them being dominated or threatened by any other great Power, was one of the aims of England's policy. Hence the endeavour to prevent Russia from reaching Constantinople and the Mediterranean.

When, finally, it is considered that even Italy showed a growing desire to make her influence felt in the development of political conditions on the eastern shores of the Adriatic, it is abundantly plain that the future of the Balkan peoples did not depend only on themselves and their relations to one another and to Turkey, but also in great measure on the policy of the interested Great Powers. On the other hand, the relations of these Powers to one another vitally affected the course of events in the Balkan peninsula. It would have suited Austria and England best to keep Turkey as strong as possible. The national aspirations of the Balkan races would thus have been kept within definite bounds, and the immediate control of the Straits would have remained in the hands of a State politically harmless, but predestined by its geographical position to guard this post against Russia as a matter of self-preservation. But they recognised that the maintenance of Turkey was only possible provided she granted to the Christian population in her territories an assured legal status. Hence they continually pressed for reforms which would satisfy the Christians to a certain extent and would still ensure the continuance of the Turkish empire with as little diminution of its power as possible. But the course of events showed clearly enough that this aim was not attainable. To carry out the vital reforms which had become indispensable to pacify the Christians even partially, would have shaken Turkey to the very foundations of her religious and political existence. English statesmen had all along been sceptical of the feasibility of this policy. Moreover, public opinion in Britain, especially among the Liberals, had always been hostile to Turkey, and at times influenced the parliamentary leaders. Nevertheless this programme was adhered to for a long time in London and Vienna, because they dreaded the incalculable consequences for European peace of any further dissolution of Turkey, and wished to postpone as long as possible the inevitable and burdensome liquidation. This last solution would only have been acceptable to Russia on condition that Turkey became a vassal state of the Czar's, and this naturally would not have suited the other Powers.

From these circumstances it followed that every local revolt in the Balkan States which inevitably hastened the disintegrating process in Turkey and brought the great clash of interested Powers within measurable distance, roused European diplomacy to feverish activity and led to violent political, and sometimes even to military, collisions. From this quarter, at any moment, the Peace of Europe might be imperilled by circumstances impossible to foresee.

As Bismarck's policy aimed at the maintenance of peace, it was of urgent importance for him to prevent any political disturbance of the peace either by the latent problem of Alsace-Lorraine, or by the open problem in the Near East. Hence two of the leading features of his policy must be to isolate France as much as possible so as to make a war of revenge out of the question, and to induce Russia and Austria to come to a settlement in the Near East, or at least to prevent them from coming to an open breach.

In order to isolate France it was advisable for Germany to get into touch as closely as possible with those states upon whose alliance France might count in the event of a war of revenge, among them Russia, Italy, and Austria. Even after 1871 there was a strong desire on the part of Austria to regain the position she had lost in 1866 should a favourable opportunity occur. A revival of the old coalition of the days of Frederick the Great—France, Austria and Russia—which Bismarck had long dreaded, was by no means so improbable as it seemed to a later generation. The League of the Three Emperors in the seventies, later on the Austro-German Triple Alliance, and the various treaties of security with Russia, all served a common end. An understanding with England was more than once considered, particularly during the Eastern crisis of 1875-1879, but all efforts failed because Bismarck stipulated for unconditional guarantees for the occupation of Alsace-Lorraine, and to this English statesmen would not consent. Even when they came into sharp conflict with France in 1882 over the occupation of Egypt, they were not to be won over. Towards the close of the eighties, when France and Russia began to draw together, Bismarck again proposed in London an alliance with England, sanctioned by Parliament, for mutual defence against an attack by France. He laid stress at that time on the fact that the knowledge that such a treaty existed would of itself be instrumental in preventing war. Lord Salisbury, who was then Foreign Secretary, was inclined to favour this suggestion. But some months later, when Count Herbert Bismarck was sent to London by his father to negotiate the Samoan question, and took the opportunity of mentioning the possibility of an alliance,[1] Lord Salisbury held distinctly aloof. He reminded him of the parliamentary control of English policy and of the influence of public opinion which would not be easily won over to an alliance.

In spite of these efforts to isolate France, Bismarck's policy towards the latter was in no sense hostile. He wished to prevent France from disturbing the peace and from undoing the terms of the Treaty of Frankfurt, and he endeavoured to establish as friendly relations as possible between Berlin and Paris. He went so far as to assure France of Germany's active support in all questions where their mutual interests did not conflict and to consent to her conquest of Annam and Tonquin. He encouraged France in her occupation of Tunis and repeatedly drew her attention to Morocco as a suitable field for her colonial activity. He hoped that a successful colonial policy would in some measure satisfy the French love of prestige, and that the new colonial empire would in time provide compensation for Alsace-Lorraine, so that possibly in the course of a few decades the thought of revenge might die out. He himself well knew that this was but a slender hope. Nevertheless he intended to leave nothing undone that could tranquillise and conciliate.

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[1] Bismarck's instructions to Count Hatzfeldt, Jan. 11th, 1889. Hatzfeldt's report of Jan. 16th and Herbert Bismarck's of March 22nd. *Grosse Politik*, iv. 400. A lively discussion has arisen as to the significance of the English alliance as a part of Bismarck's general policy. The most valuable authorities on this question are: Rachfahl, *Bismarcks Englische Bündnispolitik* (1922); Rothfels, *Bismarcks Englische Bündnispolitik* (1924); Taube, *Fürst Bismarck zwischen Deutschland und England* (1923); v. Falkenstein, *Bismarck und die Kriegsgefahr des Jahres 1887* (1924); Ritter, "Bismarcks Verhältnis zu England und die Politik des 'Neuen Kurses,'" in *Archiv f. Politik u. Geschichte*, ii. (1924); Becker, *Bismarcks Bündnispolitik* (1923); Rachfahl, "Zur Auswärtigen Politik Bismarcks," in *Weltwirtschaftl. Archiv*, xxi. (1925). I consider that the opinions of these authorities are not so dissimilar as they appear. Rothfels and Ritter seek to represent Bismarck's effort for an understanding with England as relatively unimportant for his general policy, particularly in the seventies, but they admit the existence of the effort. Rachfahl makes too much of the idea of an "option" which Bismarck exercised sometimes between Russia and Austria, and sometimes between Russia and England. It seems to me that his whole policy aimed at avoiding such an option and that the instances Rachfahl quotes were rather defensive measures, rendered necessary by the existing situation against the hostile attitude of Russia. Bismarck's intention was always to maintain as good relations as possible with Russia. He certainly never trusted Russia, and avoided doing anything that would make him dependent on her or would incur her hostility.

> "Recognition of the fact," he writes, "that Germany not merely means to retain Metz and Strassburg, but also grudges France the possibility of finding compensation for the Rhine frontier in colonial successes, of the fact that France finds Germany opposing her on all her paths, would very considerably strengthen the party in France that stands for revenge and national hatred, and would hasten the outbreak of a new French War; and I fail to discern what benefit would accrue to us from eventual victory. Even if we were victorious such a war would be a great calamity."

He felt he could not be responsible for increasing the probability of its outbreak by supporting the ambitions in Morocco which Italy was then cherishing.[1] These were prophetic words, for it was our interference against France in Morocco that two decades later helped to bring about the triumph of the revenge policy in Paris. This clear apprehension of the state of affairs led Bismarck to conclude that we ought to support France's claims in Egypt and in the Congo against England, and he acted accordingly.

The perennial crisis in Eastern Europe was the more immediately threatening, and to it Bismarck gave his special attention. In 1876 he declined the alliance with Russia which would have offended Austria and have furthered Russia's control of south-eastern Europe. During the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 and 1878, he sought to play the rôle of the "honest broker" quite prudently and disinterestedly, so as to avoid an Anglo-Russian or Russo-Austrian war, which would probably have swept Germany into the vortex and ultimately France too. The result of the negotiations at the Berlin Congress so far as European problems are concerned, may be summed up briefly: Roumania, Serbia, and Montenegro were declared independent and the last two considerably increased at Turkey's expense. In place of a large Bulgarian State, nominally independent but actually wholly dependent on Russia, and stretching right down to the Aegean Sea, as intended in the preliminary Peace of San Stefano, there were to be two small Bulgarian semi-sovereign States without any Macedonian territory and without the Aegean coast, under the suzerainty of the Sultan. In this way it was possible to maintain a geographically continuous Turkish territory in Europe from the Dardanelles to the Adriatic, whereas the establishment of a large Bulgarian State would have implied the dismemberment of European Turkey; for the western portion of the Balkan peninsula would soon have seceded from the Ottoman Empire. Austria, therefore, was allowed to occupy and administer Bosnia and Herzegovina though both territories remained nominally under the Sultan's suzerainty. She was also allowed to place garrisons and to lay out roads in the adjoining Sanjak of Novibazar. The latter, however, remained under Turkish control and lay like a wedge between the territories of Serbia and Montenegro. Bosnia was the price which Russia had to guarantee before the war to the Emperor Francis Joseph for his neutrality. Russia, indeed, would have liked to cancel the promised reward, for she herself had not received all she wanted; but she was afraid lest by doing so she might imperil what had already been accomplished, and therefore agreed to this clause too. Andrassy even extracted from Russia a secret pledge that no objection would be raised if in the case of difficulties in the Sanjak of Novibazar, Austria "eventually" occupied this territory in the same way as she had occupied Bosnia.

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[1] Despatch to Kendell, June 26, 1884.

The handing-over of Bosnia, owing largely to its ill-defined legal status, proved of little value to Austria and was full of dangerous possibilities for the future. For the time being Serbia was pacified by her gains in the south east and was fully occupied in reorganising her internal affairs. Deceived by Russia's attitude and intimidated by Austria's great increase of power, King Milan entered into a close alliance with Austria and soon after signed a defensive treaty with her, placing himself in the position of a vassal, and binding himself not to conclude any treaties with foreign Powers without her consent.[1] On the renewal of the treaty in 1889, Austria promised to facilitate Serbia's extension to the south east as much as possible. But there was no disguising the fact that whether Serbia's impetus towards expansion in the south east reached its goal or was artificially checked, she would turn with renewed ardour to the west and endeavour to effect a union first with Montenegro, then with the kindred though largely Mahomedan population of Bosnia, and finally with the South Slavs of Hungary. As soon as that happened a conflict was bound to follow between the South Slav movement and the Danubian State.

Russia left the Berlin Congress in high dudgeon. In important matters she had had to give way to England and to Austria; she alone had sacrificed both land and men and had provided easy bargains for the others—Bosnia for Austria and Cyprus for the English, who had compelled the Porte to cede it to them in return for guaranteeing to Turkey her Asiatic possessions. With Roumania she was on bad terms because she had compelled King Charles, her one reliable helper, against his wish, to exchange the Roumanian portion of Bessarabia for the Dobrudja. Bulgaria and Serbia were disillusioned by the miserable results secured by the great Czar to whom they had looked for the satisfaction of all their hopes.

Strangely enough, Russia's annoyance vented itself less against England than against Austria, and more especially against Germany, who was accused of ingratitude for Russia's conduct during the Franco-German war. The delimitation of the frontiers led to differences, in the course of which Russia indulged in actual threats. Bismarck had at that time concluded an Austro-German defensive alliance against Russian attack. But he had not the remotest intention of binding himself exclusively to Austria and thereby incurring the permanent hostility of Russia. As a matter of fact he began busily joining up the broken links with St. Petersburg. In spite of the Austrian Alliance, and along with it, he carried through in 1881 the Treaty of the Three Emperors, which under somewhat altered conditions was renewed three years later. When after the lapse of another three years, Austria refused to renew it, he concluded with Russia the much discussed Re-insurance Treaty on June 18th, 1887.[1]

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[1] For the treaty of June 16th (28th), 1881, and King Milan's letter to the Emperor Francis Joseph of Oct. 12th (24th), together with the revised version of Article 4, *vide* Pribram, *Oesterreich-Ungarns Geheimverträge*, i. 18 ff. The treaty was renewed on January 28th, 1889 (*op. cit.*, i. 51), and remained in force till January 13th, 1895.

If we consider the contents of these treaties and the negotiations leading up to them, so far as these are known, the leading ideas are as follows :—Russia was to be prevented from seeking a forcible solution of the Eastern question by the overthrow and dismemberment of Austria. She was to be made to feel that in any attempt of this kind she would have to reckon with Germany. Both Russia and Austria were to be prevented from taking any decisive steps in the Balkan Peninsula unless in agreement with one another and with Germany. Furthermore, in the event of France attacking Germany, Russia had to promise to remain neutral. On the other hand she received the assurance that Germany and Austria, together with the Czar, would prevent the Sultan opening the Straits to English battleships in the event of war. In 1887, Germany definitely recognised Bulgaria as being within the Russian sphere of influence, and also agreed that military measures taken there by the Czar would not be regarded as an infringement of Austria's legitimate interests. Indeed, should Russia be compelled to undertake a military occupation of the Straits in order to defend the entrance to the Black Sea, Germany, in a secret supplementary protocol to the Treaty, promised her diplomatic and moral support. On the other hand, shortly before the renewal of the Triple Alliance, Bismarck, at Italy's request, had compelled the Vienna Government under strong pressure to accept an additional clause, vitally affecting the Eastern question. Austria was to bind herself before proceeding to any occupation of Balkan territory, either temporary or permanent, to come to an understanding with Italy and to offer her compensation for it. Italy pledged herself in like fashion.[1] It is evident, therefore, that any extension of Austria's territory to the south east had been made very difficult, which was obviously Bismarck's intention. At the same time he promoted the conclusion of a special agreement between Austria, Italy and England, in which Germany was not included, the aim of which was to maintain the *status quo* in the Adriatic, the Aegean, and the Black Seas.[2]

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[1] These treaties are now printed at length in Pribram, *op. cit.*, i. 1 ff., 11 f., 35 f. ; the Re-insurance Treaty with the secret protocol in an appendix, 305 f., also in *Grosse Politik*, iii. 176, 334 ; v. 252.

The aim of these various supplementary adjustments was to hold back Russia as well as Austria from aggressive proceedings in the Near East. In spite of repeated attempts, Bismarck had not succeeded in bringing about a clear delimitation of the spheres of influence of both Powers in the Balkan Peninsula, and so he promised, by way of compensation, to recognise as Russia's sphere of interest a definitely circumscribed zone, without conceding to her the right to the permanent possession of specific territories. As Serbia, with Germany's knowledge, was bound to Austria by a far-reaching defensive treaty, and Roumania, since 1883, was attached by agreements to the Triple Alliance,[3] an Austrian sphere of influence which Germany would need to defend, with the same reservations as to the right of occupation, became a recognised fact. Both neighbouring Powers understood the limits they must not exceed without incurring the loss of Germany's support and, in certain circumstances, earning her enmity.

There is no ground for the oft-repeated reproach of a want of loyalty to Austria in this policy. By the treaty of 1879, Germany was pledged only to defend the Austrian occupation against a Russian attack, not to support Austrian ambitions in the Balkans, nor to hinder Russian aggression in Bulgaria and Constantinople which no amount of sophisticated explanations could construe into an attack on Austria. Even at the conclusion of the treaty, Bismarck had emphasised the fact that the treaty was purely defensive in character and was never to be exploited as a business partnership. In his *Thoughts and*

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[1] Additional Treaty to the Second Triple Alliance of Feb. 20, 1887, *vide* Pribram, i. 44; also *Grosse Politik*, iv. 179-260.

[2] For the exchange of Notes between Feb. 12th and March 24th, 1887, *vide* Pribram, i. 36; also *Grosse Politik*, iv. 261 f.

[3] Treaty of October 30, 1883, Pribram, i. 29; also the various renewals of the treaty.

*Recollections* Bismarck protested vigorously against the way in which the advocacy of Austrian interests had been substituted for the clearly defined condition of a hostile attack, adding, "It is not the task of the German Empire to lend the lives and treasure of its subjects to carry out a neighbour's designs."[1] That was no passing outburst of depression and ill-humour, but one of the fundamental ideas of his policy to which, unfortunately as we shall see, his successors did not adhere with sufficient vigour. As Austria knew definitely the limitation which Bismarck wished to see imposed on the interpretation of the treaty, she had no just ground of complaint if her German ally allowed the Russians a clear field in Bulgaria and Constantinople. Whether or not Bismarck would have been willing to let the Straits fall into Russia's power is another question. In any case he considered it was not Germany's task to prevent it but that of the Powers more vitally concerned. Hence he welcomed the conclusion of an agreement regarding the Mediterranean between England, Italy and Austria, providing for united action by these Powers against Russian aggression.

Yet Bismarck was absolutely certain that all his prudential measures were not sufficient to prevent permanently and adequately the great conflict which he feared. Steps must be taken in time, in case it did come. Germany must be armed; she must not let herself be taken by surprise. For that too he had his plan ready. If war broke out in the East, either between Russia and Austria or between Russia and England, he wished to keep his own country, which had no immediate interests there, as long as possible out of the conflict. He wanted, as he said, to remain in the background. If the war took a turn which threatened Austria's frontiers or her position as a great Power, he was resolved to intervene. Nor did he want to see an overwhelming defeat of Russia; he hoped rather that Germany, relying on her powerful army, would have the final word, and be able to restore peace without any great disturbance of power.

Taking it all round, it was a policy for securing peace as long as possible, and, in the event of war breaking out, for protecting Germany as long as possible from fighting for foreign interests. But it could only succeed if Berlin remained on good terms with Vienna and St. Petersburg, and so arranged it that both Powers would turn to Berlin before taking final decisions, because they could not otherwise be sure of Germany's attitude. Only in this way was it possible to clear up matters and mediate before resorting to the arbitrament of war.

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[1] *Thoughts and Recollections*, ii. 253.

Bismarck's attitude towards the Triple Alliance, apart from the desire to keep Italy aloof from France, was conditioned by similar considerations. The longing of the Italian Irredenta for Southern Tyrol and Dalmatia, Italy's desire for influence on the eastern shores of the Adriatic, her old hatred of the empire which had once ruled her, were all factors threatening peace, though not so immediately as did Alsace-Lorraine and the Eastern question. As an Italian diplomatist said, "Austria and Italy must either be allies or enemies." Here too Bismarck aimed at preventing the latent enmity breaking out by attaching both Powers closely to Germany, thereby enabling him, as the impartial friend, to bring his influence to bear in allaying strife.

It was only after the war that the Triple Alliance of 1882 became fully known. It was a complicated system of heterogeneous liabilities. Germany and Austria were to help Italy against any attack from France, but Italy was to help the German Empire only against a not directly provoked attack by France. By the Austro-German Treaty, which still remained in force, both empires bound themselves to help one another in the event of an attack by Russia; and the principle still held good that in the event of an unprovoked attack of two Powers against one of the Allies, the obligation to help would be equally binding. Finally Italy had expressly stipulated that in nowise were these arrangements to be viewed as directed against England.[1] Thus Austria was not bound to help Germany in the event of an attack from France, nor need Italy help the Austrians against a Russian attack, so long as no other Power came to succour the enemy. On the renewal of the Treaty in 1887, the clauses relating to the Austro-Italian compensation in the Balkans, previously mentioned, were added; but there was also a further agreement between Germany and Italy somewhat more limited in its terms, stating that any extension of the French control of Tripoli or Morocco would be resented by Germany.

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[1] The Exchange of Declarations on May 20th, 1882, in Pribram, i. 327 f.; *Grosse Politik*, iii. 245.

The whole policy of Bismarck in his last years was a well-thought-out system of simple aims and principles, often, indeed, carried out by very complex methods. What looked outwardly like some difficult and complicated diplomatic game, dependent on instantaneous effects and quick terminations, was in reality only the skilful method by which he exploited the passing situation and carried through, with marvellous sagacity, great aims commensurate with the interests of Germany and of the peace of the world. In every individual decision, his view of the situation as a whole, of the general grouping of the Powers and their reaction principally on Germany, was the dominant consideration, overruling any attempt to snatch at petty successes of a temporary nature. He realised that Germany's security and future did not depend on trifling gains of territory or spheres of influence but on the possibility of preventing permanently the formation of an overwhelming coalition of all those neighbours who were envious of her new accession of power.

If Bismarck was tormented by the *cauchemar des coalitions*, and haunted by the spectre of a grouping of the Powers which left Germany isolated, his conception of the general situation and of Germany's means of resistance was the cause of it. He had carried through the unification of Germany in spite of immense difficulties and dangers, and he knew well to what serious perils her newly won position was constantly exposed. She was certainly equal to any individual enemy, but Bismarck never for a moment shut his eyes to the fact that a war against several opponents on different fronts would resolve itself into a struggle for her very existence, the issue of which would be wholly uncertain. Hence his extreme caution and his vigilant survey of the constant fluctuations of international politics; hence, too, he looked upon the maintenance of the peace as Germany's supreme interest, and succeeded in maintaining it in circumstances that were often difficult, owing his success not to chance or accident, but to his far-sighted, prudent and disinterested policy, and to his faculty for adapting himself to changing conditions. In the reports of the Belgian embassy we see how pessimistic was the outlook of the statesmen of the eighties regarding the European situation, how they considered the outbreak of war as possible at almost any moment, and peace as certain only for a matter of weeks or months. That is how to measure the value of Bismarck's service.

If this carefully planned and built up system were abandoned at any point it would no longer achieve its former results. Either it must be replaced by an entirely new system or Germany's national policy was doomed by fumbling and pettifogging methods to failure on failure, which the insecurity of her position and the danger of sudden political upheavals would tend to aggravate.

Nevertheless, Bismarck himself outstepped the limits he had laid down, when in 1884, under the pressure of interested industrial circles, he withdrew his original opposition to the acquisition of colonies, and created German Protectorates in Africa and in the South Seas, in spite of considerable opposition from England. I cannot here enter further into the difficult question as to the motives which actuated him.[1] Perhaps he was more conscious than was generally realised that the age of European isolation and the control of policy by the great European Powers was irrevocably nearing its end, and that the formation of a system of World States was impending. If Germany was to play a part in this new Areopagus of the World, commensurate with her growing political strength, she ought not to remain a purely continental Power, she ought to claim a hearing in African and Asiatic questions as an owner and interested party. But though Bismarck may have felt and desired this, he never allowed considerations of colonial expansion to decide Germany's national policy, or to influence her alliances and enmities. For the most part his aim was not to found colonies in the regular sense, but where German labour and German capital had already secured a foothold, and there existed neither a local administration nor the flag of some other Great Power, to provide the struggling national forces with the necessary protection and support which as elements in a powerful empire they were entitled to demand. It is significant that in his Memoirs, which he intended to be a political testament, the colonies are not even mentioned. To him they were simply a pleasant addition to German power, the true foundation of which remained for him European Germany, whose peace and security he would never have risked for the sake of extending this very modest colonial empire.

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[1] *Vide* Hagen, *Bismarcks Kolonialpolitik* (1923); also Rogge, "Bismarcks Kolonialpolitik als Aussenpolitisches Problem" in *Historische Vierteljahrschrift*, xxi. (1923).

# II. THE DEBUT OF WILLIAM II

On March 15th, 1890, the great statesman who had hitherto guided Germany's destiny was compelled to tender his resignation, and the youthful Emperor instantly accepted it. It was the outcome of a long and bitter struggle for power, scarcely noticed by the general public, but watched and abetted by those concerned with suspense, dismay, and often with impatience. Undoubtedly Bismarck wished to retain his office, even against his sovereign's will, and regarded it as the duty of his colleagues to support him unreservedly in the struggle. It was not sheer thirst for personal rule which drove him to this course, but the firm conviction that in the personality of the Emperor William II. there were serious dangers for Germany. The Kaiser, however, wished to rule in person. He felt that the Chancellor's position, and the way in which he sometimes advocated his wishes, were incompatible with his monarchical dignity and vocation. This, and this alone, was the real root of the hostility between the two men, not their divergent views on social and political questions, nor even the irreconcilable differences in their general outlook; for the Kaiser had no firm and wide political outlook, but was swayed by momentary moods and impulses, arising from the prevalent feeling. Even questions of foreign policy played a very secondary part in this great conflict. It has sometimes been alleged that there was an insurmountable difference of opinion over the scope and purpose of the Austro-German Treaty, and over the attitude of Germany towards Russia's Bulgarian plans. As a matter of fact it was not so much that they held conflicting opinions on these questions as that the Kaiser was annoyed that despatches relating to alleged Russian preparations for attack had not been brought to his notice at the right time. It is true that Bismarck had repeatedly deplored and criticised the Kaiser's acts and speeches because of their effect on foreign policy. But these things were not of decisive moment.

Bismarck's dismissal marked the beginning of William II.'s personal rule. How far did he himself govern and direct our foreign policy? Did he not merely think he did it? The difficult question of the responsibility for German policy after Bismarck can only be adequately solved when all the archives of that period have been examined and all the surviving witnesses have told what they know. Only a provisional answer can be attempted here. The Emperor read a great part of the Foreign Office correspondence and added pencil notes, sometimes expressing his passing mood, sometimes embodying actual political instructions. The latter were forwarded to the embassies for their consideration. On important questions the Emperor was given immediate information, verbal or written, and his decisions were incorporated in the records. Furthermore, he frequently held political conversations with foreign representatives about which he gave the Foreign Office full and accurate information. When he travelled abroad, as he often did, he was accompanied by a diplomatist who kept in close touch with the Foreign Office.

All this might give rise to the impression that William II. had the virtual conduct of foreign policy in his own hands. That was not altogether the case. Everything that was submitted to him had been previously chosen by the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. At times the Emperor was not fully informed on very important matters, and subsequently found himself confronted by a situation which his advisers had brought about without consulting him. This actual exclusion of the Emperor through the withholding of information happened most frequently in the time of Prince Bülow. The earlier and later leaders at the Foreign Office did not approve of this attitude. Moreover, the decisions in his marginal comments were not always taken seriously and acted upon. In reports on urgent matters his decision was often expressed in simple and brief agreement with the line of thought submitted to him. If tactfully handled he often modified or even, in deference to his advisers, abandoned his own strongly expressed opinions; often, too, he let himself be persuaded to consent to proceedings which were wholly counter to his own feelings. We shall come across instances of this sort.

But after all, for the effective conduct of policy, beyond regular and reliable co-operation and thorough understanding of all the information to hand, the most important thing is the steadfast pursuit of clear and definite aims. The Kaiser had some favourite schemes to which he was constantly recurring and to which his advisers had to try and accommodate themselves as best they could; but he had no well-thought-out political system, for he was an impulsive man and strongly influenced by moods. Again and again we shall find him hesitating suddenly between the most divergent extremes. The personality of the Emperor was much feebler than was apparent from his pompous language and those public displays of monarchical sovereignty such as he loved. He was never able to overcome the secret consciousness of his immaturity and his lack of stability. Those who could handle him skilfully and make due allowance for this autocratic self-consciousness could easily guide him in a definite direction, but they could never be sure that he would not go off at a tangent, under the influence of some unexpected occurrence or of some other personality. On the whole, William II. influenced our policy, not so much by any permanent control of it, as by the disturbing consequences of his sudden and impulsive interferences. These certainly did influence German policy permanently, for it was scarcely possible to ignore the Sovereign's opinions, especially when they were publicly announced, and general policy had to be brought into some sort of harmony with them.

As there was no Imperial Cabinet, the constitutional responsibility for our foreign policy rested exclusively with the Imperial Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The lack of a Cabinet was certainly a hindrance to any uniform and logical policy. Where great decisions and the general outlines of policy are laid down by the Cabinet, and can only be altered with the Cabinet's sanction, the Foreign Minister has ample scope for carrying out the measures sanctioned, while at the same time an adequate safeguard is provided against the sudden changes and rash, ill-considered measures possible when the decision lies in the hands of one or two persons. It must be admitted that herein lay the most ominous defect in the Imperial Constitution of 1871. The Federal Council had no influence on foreign policy. The diplomatic commission was a mere shadow, and the attempt in the last years before 1914 to infuse some life into it was of little effect.

Bismarck's first successor, General von Caprivi, doubtless a valiant soldier, had never in his life meddled with politics and he was slow and uncertain in finding his way in this unfamiliar territory. He was not capable of effective leadership and he was dependent on the information and advice of his expert subordinates. The new Secretary of State (Count Herbert Bismarck had resigned with his father), Baron von Marschall, who had been Public Prosecutor in Mannheim, and later Minister for Baden in Berlin and a member of the Federal Council, was also a political novice.

Bismarck's dismissal deprived the country of an invaluable asset in the prestige and personality of the greatest statesman of the day. That in itself was a serious disadvantage. By setting in his place two inexperienced amateurs, the risk was further increased. It was not that there was a lack of talent; but it was evident that the Emperor would have no one from the Bismarck set and no one whose personality could in any way fetter his own authority. It was an extraordinary thing that Bismarck was not allowed to instruct his successor personally as to the principles of the policy pursued by him and as to the general situation. We can understand the great statesman feeling his dismissal not merely as a personal insult but most of all as a downright blunder. As he justly says,[1] one should take the same precautionary measures in transferring the entire business of a great empire as are taken as a matter of course at the transfer of any ordinary property.

Under these circumstances the actual guidance of German policy fell to the lot of the only member of the Bismarck school who still remained in office, Baron von Holstein, the head of the political department of the Foreign Office. Holstein was certainly the greatest intellectual force among the statesmen of the post-Bismarck period. He exercised a fascination over all who came in contact with him, due partly to his superior mental ability and political experience, but partly to fear of the ruthless lust for revenge deep seated in this man, who was implacable in his personal relations and in the way he exploited his information. Lonely, trusting no one, he deliberately withdrew into his private room, and from there guided the manifold political threads and settled all personal questions, being treated by the various members of the diplomatic service with a mixture of respectful admiration and secret fear. There was thought to be a morbid strain in his nature, though no one ventured to make allowances for it. His bitterness and distrust were probably due to his own experience of life. In 1871, when Secretary to the German Embassy in Paris, Bismarck had employed him to watch Count Harry von Arnim, the German Ambassador, his immediate superior. The scandal in which the latter was implicated, and in which Holstein appeared as a witness against von Arnim, had apparently left him with the feeling that he had been made use of in a way that was not altogether honourable. This was the origin of his long and carefully concealed hatred of Bismarck, in whose overthrow he took an active part, though here again remaining behind the scenes and thrusting others into the foreground. He knew that the retiring Chancellor saw through him, and his greatest anxiety was lest Bismarck or his son should again return to power. That would have meant his instant overthrow, and he was determined by every means in his power to prevent it.

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[1] *Thoughts and Recollections*, iii. 115.

This shy, eccentric man, who deliberately avoided contact with foreign diplomatists and maintained intercourse only with a few intimate friends, must gradually have lost that close touch with current events which is so vital to a statesman. His interest in economic problems, whose importance was constantly increasing, was as slight as his knowledge of them : indeed he was by temperament far more inclined to refined and hair-splitting logical analysis than to practical business. Probably it was this that made him avoid all direct responsibility, but show himself hostile to any higher official who tried to take the conduct of affairs out of his hands. He would scent afar off any attempt of this kind, and he regarded all means as justifiable which helped him to crush its author.

Yet it would be doing Holstein a great injustice to deny that he cherished patriotic feelings and the honest desire to serve his country. But the good of his country was too strongly bound up with his own personal position. In spite of his diplomatic training he lacked the broad and comprehensive outlook invaluable in the conduct of a national policy. To be able to manœuvre dexterously so that Germany was spared any shocks to her power or her prestige, and when possible to acquire a little more territory, seemed to him the consummation of political wisdom.[1]

Quite apart from personal defects, it was scandalous that the policy of a great empire should have been guided for long years by a man in a comparatively obscure position, unknown throughout the country, who scarcely ever had an opportunity of speaking directly with the Emperor, and who never appeared n Parliament. He was not in the least responsible either to the Kaiser or to the public for his actions. The Imperial Chancellor and the Secretary of State, who acted according to his counsels and his ideas, had to bear the responsibility. Such a back-stairs policy was unworthy of a great State, and its consequence was that the Kaiser, who believed himself able to assume the control, attached little value to the selection of trained diplomatists for responsible positions.

Hence from the outset it was doubtful if a uniform and coherent policy were possible. The Kaiser talked loudly about holding on the old course although the pilot was changed; but it is highly questionable whether he really understood the compass by which Bismarck had steered. He could not ensure safe guidance. Caprivi and Marschall not only lacked political experience; from the very outset they felt insecure. When Bismarck himself had been dismissed they certainly could not hope to remain, if their measures proved inacceptable in high quarters. But the Kaiser neither felt any confidence in them, nor had any personal feeling for them; he merely wanted onvenient tools to carry out his wishes. Holstein, too, had not he slightest respect for his two superiors, whose work he directed, and yet he himself had no direct access to the Kaiser. Hence arose the necessity for an intermediary who would be in personal touch with the Kaiser and with the true leader of foreign policy. The choice fell upon Count Philipp Eulenburg, who had long been an intimate friend of the Kaiser, and at the same time, as an official in the Foreign Office, had been in close touch with Holstein. The part he played in the following years has now been fully revealed in the documents recently published.[1] Eulenburg was a man of considerable distinction and diplomatic ability, full of enthusiastic affection and admiration for his Imperial friend and honestly convinced of Holstein's great abilities and indispensable services. He was neither a statesman with ideas and aims of his own, nor an artist of distinction, as he imagined, but an honest man sincerely desirous to help things forward; not an intriguer as calumny afterwards averred, nor yet a feeble-minded, frivolous visionary. For long years he was the only man who told the Kaiser the truth, sometimes in very plain language, and though his admonitions often fell unheeded, at least they got a hearing. In difficult emergencies Holstein sought his aid to lay his counsels before the Kaiser, often with the knowledge of his superiors, but sometimes at least behind their backs. The fact that the new régime functioned as well as it did is largely due to Eulenburg. But it was very significant of the general situation that such an intermediary should be necessary.

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[1] For descriptions of Holstein *vide* the various books by O. Hammann, also he *Denkwürdigkeiten* of Prince Eulenburg, and Hohenlohe's *Aus meinem eben*, p. 299 f. (Frankfurt, 1925).

The first two notable events of the new course were the non-renewal of the Re-insurance Treaty with Russia and the Heligoland agreement with England.[2]

The Re-insurance Treaty expired in June, 1890. Before Bismarck's resignation,[3] the Russian Minister, Giers, with the Czar's approval, had raised the question of renewing the treaty for six years with a view to giving it a permanent character later on by a further extension. Bismarck was in favour of this idea, the Kaiser had given his assent, and the Russian Ambassador,

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[1] *Vide* Haller, *Aus dem Leben des Fürsten Philipp zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld* (1924), which contains useful information about Holstein as well.

[2] *Vide* Rachfahl, " Die Deutsche Aussenpolitik in der Wilhelminischen Ära " (*Einzelschriften z. Politik u. Geschichte*, No. 6, 1924), which taken with the most important conclusions of vols. vii.-xii. of the Foreign Office Archives, agrees with the narrative given in the first edition of my book.

[3] What follows is based on Herbert Bismarck's report of March 20th (*Grosse Politik*, vii. 3, 4).

Count Shuvaloff, was empowered to sign the document. On March 17th, he called on Bismarck to inform him of this. But on Bismarck telling him that in a few hours he would no longer be Chancellor, Shuvaloff hesitated about signing the treaty with his successor, whose attitude towards Russia was not yet known. He communicated with St. Petersburg and told Bismarck that in the meantime he could not sign. Count Herbert Bismarck, who remained in office a few days after his father's dismissal, informed the Kaiser, whose comment on the report was, "In agreement with the renewal of the treaty and empower you to inform Shuvaloff." Count Herbert reported again, that there seemed to be some misunderstanding, and now that Bismarck had resigned Shuvaloff was not willing to sign. To this the Emperor's answer was "Why?"[1]

The fact remains that both before and immediately after Bismarck's departure, the Kaiser was ready to renew the treaty although it contained the recognition of Bulgaria as part of the Russian sphere of interest. He took no umbrage whatever at its conditions. On the 20th March, he himself told the Russian Ambassador that he was perfectly ready to adopt the Czar's point of view. On the 27th, Shuvaloff received authority from St. Petersburg to sign with the new Imperial Chancellor, and even if necessary to omit the supplementary protocol which contained far-reaching liabilities binding Germany to diplomatic support in the event of the occupation of Bulgaria or the Straits.

Meanwhile, influenced by Holstein, Caprivi and Marschall began to have doubts about renewing the treaty, and these were strengthened by a memorandum from Count Berchem, Under-Secretary of State, who was also quitting office, and who in this particular instance exerted a perceptible and disastrous influence. The gist of this note[2] was to the effect that the treaty aimed at encouraging Russia in aggressions on the Balkan Peninsula, and therefore harboured within itself the danger of a general war. It was incompatible with the Austro-German alliance and was likely to deceive and alienate permanently one of our neighbours. If Russia betrayed its existence to Austria, Italy, Turkey, or England, the disgrace to our government would be irreparable.

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[1] Marginal comments in Herbert Bismarck's two reports of March 20th.

[2] Count Berchem's memorandum, March 25th, 1890 (*Grosse Politik*, vii. 4).

We gained nothing by the treaty, for if Russia began war in the East, and France, as was to be expected, immediately turned against us, Russia would anyhow be unable to help France, being herself engaged in the East. But the choice of the moment for beginning a European War would pass with this treaty entirely into Russia's hands. If Russia occupied Bulgaria, Austria would arm and Russia would threaten the Galician frontier, whereupon the terms of the alliance would become operative for us. Furthermore, Russia could scarcely carry out the occupation of Bulgaria without infringing Roumania's neutrality, thereby compelling us to declare war, and driving Turkey into Russia's arms, while our abandonment of Bulgaria would alienate Italy from the Triple Alliance. The existence of the treaty could not save us from the unpleasantness of having Russian troops massed along our eastern frontiers. A complicated policy, such as Bismarck prosecuted, was no longer possible, and the mode of procedure now should be clear, open and peaceable, free from dangerous diplomatic risks. In any case it was desirable that Russia should not be discouraged in her expectations in Bulgaria, and that her gaze should still rest on the Straits, for this kept her in opposition to England and perhaps also to France. But it was not for us to bind ourselves, and certainly not by written word. The danger of Franco-Russian co-operation might be less now than in recent years, but we should only force the Russians and the French to combine if we encouraged Russia in a Bulgarian adventure. If this aggression led to war everyone would feel that we had left our allies in the lurch. Count Berchem came to the conclusion that we ought to take advantage of Count Shuvaloff's first statement and withdraw from the agreement as courteously as possible.

No proof is necessary to show that Count Berchem was quite wrong as to the aims Bismarck was pursuing in this treaty, also as to Russia's immediate plans and as to Franco-Russian relations. He did not ask himself whether or not the refusal to renew it would have more unfavourable results than the treaty itself. Under the influence of this memorandum, which was approved by the other members of the Foreign Office although it was built up on many erroneous premises, Caprivi decided to oppose the renewal of the treaty. After some opposition von Schweinitz, German ambassador at St. Petersburg, who had been summoned to Berlin, complied with the wishes of his new chief. He considered the Re-insurance Treaty incompatible with the agreement with Roumania, which was laid before him. On March 28th they both made their reports to the Kaiser. It was only after hearing von Schweinitz's views that the Kaiser regretfully consented to the non-renewal of the treaty and gave his consent to the following instructions: the Ambassador was to declare, "that on their part they were determined, in the future as in the past, to maintain the best relations with Russia, but that the change of officials then taking place in Germany made it incumbent on them to go carefully and avoid far-reaching negotiations, and was the reason why they decided to refrain from renewing the treaty."

When Schweinitz communicated this decision, M. de Giers was in consternation. At first he thought it might be only a matter of altering the text, and to this he would willingly agree. He felt that without this treaty Russia would be completely isolated, as England was evidently drawing nearer to the Triple Alliance, and in France there was a strong party for peace. The restraining influence also that Bismarck had exercised over Austria was threatening to disappear. He hoped that at least the recognition of Bulgaria as a Russian sphere of influence might be secured in some other form, perhaps by an exchange of notes. Schweinitz, while assuring him of Germany's unchanged attitude in the future, was inclined to favour this proposal and let it be seen from his report that he really desired a new agreement with Russia. He emphasised the point that M. de Giers wanted something in writing so that a successor less friendly to Germany would be bound to neutrality in the event of a French attack on Germany. M. de Giers constantly reverted to this idea; he offered further modifications of the text regarding Bulgaria if only a written treaty could be reached. He even took the unusual step of reminding the Kaiser of his verbal declaration to Shuvaloff at the interview on March 20th. Schweinitz advised carrying out the proposal which secured us Russia's neutrality without demanding heavy services in return. He warned us that if we declined outright the accommodating suggestions of the Russian minister, the latter or his successor might be compelled to seek elsewhere "the support he did not get from us."

In Berlin the matter was then thoroughly gone into. Herr von Holstein drew up a statement explaining in detail that even without the supplementary protocol the treaty was a serious matter for us because we had no interest in intervening in the matter of the unconditional control of the Straits so as to make Russia invulnerable for England. He considered it was expecting too much of Russia that she should keep the treaty secret when by communicating it she could instantly drive a wedge between Germany and England and might upset the Triple Alliance. He counselled declining renewal or treating the Russian suggestion in dilatory fashion. If later on we wished to draw off somewhat from Russia it should be done quite openly, so that our allies would see that nothing was agreed upon which was counter to their interests. Holstein completely ignored the fact that this treaty, which he thought so obnoxious, as well as the much more dangerous supplementary protocol, had already been in force for three years without Russia having made the slightest attempt to turn it to account in the way he feared. Any such attempt would have ruined the treaty for Russia without making either England or Austria more favourable to her plans.

Holstein was supported by Raschdau, Counsellor of Legation, who considered that in the event of a Franco-German war the treaty offered no adequate security for Russia's neutrality, as there was no definite statement as to who was the aggressor. From this point of view it would have been easy to deduce the worthlessness of the Triple Alliance as well. Finally Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter, afterwards Secretary of State, supported the dissentients, declaring that we certainly ought not to deprive England, Austria and Italy of the possibility of defending the Straits against Russia. Von Marschall, Secretary of State, heartily concurred in Holstein's view of the position. He considered it decisive that the knowledge of the bare existence of a secret agreement between us and Russia was sufficient to shatter the Triple Alliance.

So it came about that within two months of Bismarck's lismissal there was no one in the Foreign Office who defended he system of foreign policy which he had built up with such oil, or even showed the slightest grasp of its meaning : a further roof of the often repeated assertion that Bismarck by his rbitrary methods tolerated only tools and lacked the art of ttracting colleagues of independent judgment. Nobody any onger seemed to know the fundamental ideas underlying the iplomacy of his last years. The strangest thing in this incident s the attitude of Holstein, who was throughout its moving spirit,[1] nd yet as an old colleague of Bismarck's was bound to know he true state of affairs. It is impossible to avoid the suspicion hat his great anxiety was, by making a breach with the Bismarck radition, to make more difficult the dreaded return of the great hancellor to power, and that the personal motive outweighed vith him all other considerations.

On May 23rd the Kaiser agreed to Caprivi's proposal that he Russian suggestions should be declined because of the danger f indiscretions.[2] "Our policy must be, and ought to be, only simple one"; Russia should come to a direct understanding vith Austria. At the same time he sanctioned a programme ubmitted by Caprivi for our future policy towards Russia, the eading features of which were these: Russia was obviously anxious o break up the Triple Alliance and alienate us from England. she succeeded in this we should some day have to choose between ussia and Austria, without being able to count on the support f Italy and England, while Russia, Austria and France would e free to harass us. Every secret treaty was a mine underneath ne Triple Alliance. Also, no verbal assurances concerning ulgaria should be given. A treaty with Russia would not fford us such complete security in the event of a Franco-German Var that we could strip our eastern frontier and throw our ntire strength against France. Public opinion, the support of hich was absolutely necessary in the matter of treaties, would anction the treaty neither in Germany nor in Russia. The ressure of public opinion might at the decisive moment upset the alliance and render it worthless. If we declined, it was extremely improbable that Russia would come to an agreement with England and France on the Eastern question. Our part was to maintain good relations with Russia, and where we were not prepared to lend her direct support at least to put no obstacles in her path. Any attempt on Russia's part to force us from this position would only induce us to make the old alliances all the more secure.

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[1] In a letter of March 22nd, he says he proposed to Caprivi to discard the e-insurance Treaty. Cf. *Grosse Politik*, vii. 47 n.

[2] Caprivi's note of May 23rd; memorandum to Schweinitz, May 29th *rosse Politik*, vii. 29-36).

Thus the restraining influence on Austria in the Eastern question, which had been an essential and indispensable feature of Bismarck's general policy, was now considered disloyal, and Russia had thus no longer any security that it would continue to be exercised. For these disciples of a "simple" policy Bismarck's system was too complicated. They evidently felt that by continuing it they might land themselves in situations to which they were unequal. They lacked confidence in their own abilities, and they completely failed to grasp the fact that by their conduct they were increasing precisely what they wanted to avoid—the danger of a great war.

Prince Reuss, who had been for many years our Ambassador in Vienna, only now learned for the first time of the existence of the Re-insurance Treaty as well as of all the proceedings connected with it. He expressed his agreement with the new direct methods, but added significantly,[1] "Prince Bismarck had little faith in the efficacy of the Austrian alliance and did not regard it as an equivalent for the dangers to which we might be exposed, hemmed in as we are between Russia and France." As things were, he added, if the forces of our ally seemed doubtful, we must lay the more value on her trustworthiness and good-will, which would gain in strength when she felt that she could rely on us more than formerly. That sounds like trenchant criticism behind the ostensible acquiescence. Whether his words were so intended may be doubtful, but in any case they show that our Ambassador was profoundly conscious of the decisive contrast between Bismarck's policy and that of the new system.

After the lapse of the treaty Russia could no longer count upon Germany holding aloof, if she attacked either in Sofia or Constantinople, and thereby called forth remonstrances from

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[1] *Grosse Politik*, vii. 36.

Austria, even although Austrian territory was not threatened. She must fear that we should immediately range ourselves alongside Austria. To those who, till recently, had adhered o a policy friendly to Germany, it seemed as if Skobeleff's dictum had come true—that the road to Constantinople ran hrough Berlin.

For a long time back Russia had been wooed by France, who wished to form an alliance with her, and so escape from her solation. But the autocratic Czar objected strongly to a treaty with the democratic Republic. Now, however, his advisers were able to tell him that Russia's interests required him to suppress hese feelings. If Germany were to be counted as a possible enemy, there was no better means of hindering or minimising a uture attack from her than by an alliance with France.

Even before 1890, there had been a strong feeling in Russia n favour of an understanding with France; for the economic war between Germany and Russia caused by the Russian tariffs, and Bismarck's closing of the German money market against a Russian loan, had already considerably loosened the ties with he German Empire. The leading financial circles in France had immediately come forward and furnished the Czar with a large oan to restore order in his finances. French munition manuacturers supplied weapons to the Russian army, Baron Mohrenheim, the Russian Ambassador in Paris, agreeing to the condition hat they should never be used against France. But it was a long tep from this accommodation in industrial and domestic matters o a political and military league against Germany. No one can ay with certainty whether or not the renewal of the Re-insurance Treaty would have prevented such a conclusion. It is certain hat the announcement of non-renewal made it much easier to arry it through. It was further helped by the second important ndertaking of the new men—the treaty with England.

The establishment of better relations with England was not in tself outside the scope of Bismarck's programme. The great hancellor had always deemed it a matter of the first importance, n spite of occasional ups and downs, to stand well with England. He had helped to bring about the Entente of 1887 on the Mediterranean question, and in his well-known letter to Lord Salisbury n 1887 he had expressed the conviction that even without a written bond it was as much to Germany's interests to prevent any injury to Britain's world-power as it was to Britain's interest to maintain in the German Empire a steady counterpoise to France and Russia.[1] More than once he had even contemplated an alliance with England against French military ambitions, although he admitted that it would be difficult to move the island empire from her traditional policy and to induce her to undertake binding engagements in the event of a European War. He had also planned to regain Heligoland and had taken some preliminary steps, but was waiting until England herself had given an opening. He was afraid of formidable compensation being exacted if we showed too keen a desire for the possession of this tiny islet in the North Sea. But he had never intended, for the sake of this treaty, to sacrifice his good relations with Russia, nor to allow England to use Germany as a tool in her political struggles against Russia in Asia.

But a thing is no longer the same when another person does it. The day after Bismarck's retirement, at a dinner at the Schloss in Berlin, the Kaiser made a speech in presence of the Prince of Wales in which he alluded to the Brotherhood-in-arms of Waterloo, and expressed the hope that the German army and the English fleet together would protect the peace of the world. How could such words waken pleasant sensations in the Czar, who regarded England as his most dangerous enemy? As son of an English Princess and grandson of old Queen Victoria, it was believed at the Czar's court that the Kaiser's sympathies were really with England. Shortly afterwards negotiations were begun which led to the Anglo-German Treaties of June 24th and July 1st, 1890. Germany received Heligoland and ceded Zanzibar to the English; the African colonies of both Powers received new delimitations, Germany sacrificing some of her frontier territory in East Africa and receiving in return the recognition of her authority as far as Lake Tanganyika, and access to the Zambesi for German South West Africa. The treaty was bitterly attacked by the German colonial party, and even Bismarck expressed the view that Heligoland might have been got on easier terms had the situation been better handled.

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[1] *Vide* O. Hammann, *Zur Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, p. 238; *Grosse Politik*, iv. 376.

e that as it may, the acquisition of Heligoland was a valuable rengthening of our position in the North Sea ; it rid us of an nglish outpost right at the mouth of the Elbe and gave us a rmidable nucleus for our growing fleet.

Advantageous as this was for us, in the time and circumstances which the treaty was concluded there was an element of wide olitical significance which must not be overlooked. Taken in onjunction with the refusal to renew the Re-insurance Treaty, his new treaty was interpreted at St. Petersburg as a change-ver on Germany's part to England, as an indication of an anti-ussian trend of affairs. When Germany dissolved her old olitical relationship with Russia and at the same time entered nto a close connection with her strongest rival, there seemed mall prospect of Russia gaining her ends in the Near East ithout getting entangled in a conflict with Germany.

Hence the first transactions under the new régime created a eeling in St. Petersburg that lightened wonderfully the task f the French adherents of the *revanche* policy. It would ave been difficult to persuade the Czar to receive the visit of he French fleet at Kronstadt in 1891 and to listen, standing, hile the hated Marseillaise was being played, had he not felt onvinced that Russia needed France to hold a virtually hostile ermany in check. After this first step had been taken, the ressure on Alexander III. steadily increased. After the renewal f the Triple Alliance in the spring of 1891, which seemed to arry with it a further strengthening of the relations with England, he Czar consented to an exchange of notes with France.[1] Both overnments pledged themselves to confidential discussion of urrent questions which might disturb the peace, more especially f the mutual measures necessary in the event of one of them eing threatened by attack. The Czar had insisted that this greement should also hold good for conflicts outside Europe. he French had consented to these general terms, though isliking the possibility of being thereby called upon to render ssistance against England, because they were afraid that the hole transaction might otherwise fall through. As regards the ast they received the comforting assurance that Russia was ot thinking of occupying either Bulgaria or Constantinople, but merely wished to maintain the *status quo* and restrain the Sultan from hostile proceedings. Nevertheless they urgently pressed for a military convention, specially designed in the event of war with one of the members of the Triple Alliance. In that case the Czar was to pledge himself first and foremost to direct the main body of his forces immediately against Germany and not against Austria. After prolonged negotiations they gained their point. On August 17th, 1892, the chief of the Russian General Staff and the French General Boisdeffre signed a military convention.[1] Both Powers pledged themselves in the event of either of them being attacked by a member of the Triple Alliance supported by Germany, to throw the bulk of their forces against Germany. As soon as one of the Triple Alliance Powers mobilised, the Russian and French armies would mobilise and concentrate on the German frontiers. It was definitely stated "these fighting forces will take the field completely equipped and as quickly as possible, in order to force Germany to fight simultaneously in the East and in the West." The convention further decreed that after the outbreak of war neither of the two Powers might sign a separate peace, and that these conditions should remain in force as long as the Triple Alliance lasted. Although outwardly this treaty appeared to be purely military it was really a political document. It was formally ratified by the Czar and the Government of the Republic on December 27th, 1893, and January 4th, 1894.[2] The Franco-Russian Treaty had thereby developed a sharp point aimed exclusively at Germany.

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[1] *Vide* the Third Yellow Book, *L'Alliance franco-russe*, 1918, p. 26.

There was undoubtedly at that time no intention on Russia's part of undertaking an attack on Germany even with French help, or of furthering a French war of revenge. Both the Czar and his responsible advisers regarded the alliance as a safeguard against Germany, and in given circumstances as a means of restraining their western neighbour from supporting Austria if war with her broke out in the East. To that extent Russian and French statesmen were right in alluding to the peaceful character of the Dual Alliance. Nevertheless their intention of condemning Germany, under threat of war on both fronts, to a policy of inaction and *laisser-faire*, heedless of her own treaty engagements, ontained in itself the possibility of dangerous developments; dded to that, the entire Pan-Slav press with its strident ambitions nd its influential patrons at court constantly fanned animosity gainst Germany and was always ready to lend a wider ignificance to the treaty.

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[1] *L'Alliance franco-russe*, p. 144.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 198.

The completion of the Franco-Russian Entente certainly ntailed a serious change for the worse in the general political ituation of Germany. France was released from the ban of solation. This might have had a tranquillising effect upon hat proud and sensitive people, but it also allowed hopes of evenge, which now seemed attainable, to spring up afresh and anslate themselves into deeds. Russia had a dangerous tool eady for use, in case we were not complaisant in the East. So was that the electric current, hitherto lacking, between the wo sources of unrest—Alsace-Lorraine and the Balkans—was et up and the danger of a war on two fronts, so dreaded by ismarck, was brought within measurable distance.

It would have been a grave dereliction of their duty if in this osition of things German statesmen had not considered an crease of our fighting strength commensurate with the heavy sk of meeting both opponents. It was no self-seeking plan f attack but a perfectly natural and legitimate activity that d to the passing of the army laws of that year. Although they id not succeed in carrying through universal military service nd the complete utilisation of the whole populace for national efence, they sought by the introduction of the two years' ervice to make the growing burdens more bearable for the ation at large.

In addition to this strengthening of our military forces, it was ecessary for our security and for the peace of the world that e Triple Alliance should be firmly maintained, and when this ad been seen to, that our relations with England should be rengthened. In 1891 the Triple Alliance was renewed very uch on the old terms. Italy received a promise of help from ermany in the event of her not being able to maintain her oting in the North African territories which she had acquired. definite prospect was held out of England's co-operation in a mmon settlement of the problems of North Africa, such as ad already been reached on the Eastern question.

During these negotiations England had been using her influence at Rome to persuade the Italian minister, Rudini, who was sympathetic to France, to renew the Triple Alliance. But the attempts at establishing a close connection between England and the Triple Alliance with pledges strictly binding on both sides, although renewed in the following years, came to nothing.

In 1891, when the Kaiser visited Queen Victoria at Windsor, he took with him Baron von Marschall, who had a long and thorough discussion with Lord Salisbury on the general situation.[1] Lord Salisbury did not conceal the fact that he viewed with considerable anxiety Russia's designs on the Straits and France's intentions in Syria and Morocco, and that the constant insistence of the French upon the evacuation of Egypt was extremely irksome. He would obviously have been glad to receive a firm pledge from Germany to support him in opposing these schemes. Von Marschall, however, held fast by the Bismarckian principle that Germany should not entangle herself in these remote problems, but maintain an attitude of reserve. In Morocco, he said, Germany had no interest; in the Near East it was England's affair to defend Constantinople against the Russians; if Germany were to intervene here she would be risking war on both frontiers, and furthermore, public opinion in Germany would consider that there was no justification for a war for the sake of Eastern questions. On his expressing a doubt about England acting energetically, Lord Salisbury replied that she would certainly do so while he was at the helm; if Russia attempted to occupy Constantinople, the English Fleet would be there; nor would Egypt be evacuated. In Roumania, which had been showing an inclination to come to an understanding with Russia, he promised to use his influence to uphold the Triple Alliance.

Such was roughly the position of the two Powers. Both were conscious of the important interests at stake in the Mediterranean; both wished to keep in touch; both regarded the Franco-Russian agreement as a danger; and both were averse from hard-and-fast pledges.

In the summer of 1892 the Conservatives were replaced by a Liberal Government. Gladstone, the new Prime Minister, was known to be hostile to Turkey and not friendly to Germany. Lord Rosebery, the Foreign Secretary, was more imperialistic in outlook than Gladstone, and wished on the whole to carry out Lord Salisbury's policy, but out of consideration for the Premier and his other colleagues, he had to walk very warily. The German Government, Conservative in spirit, preferred a Conservative Cabinet at the helm. They knew that the English Liberals were more in sympathy with democratic France than with imperialist Germany. Nevertheless they sought to keep up friendly relations with Rosebery, who met their advances courteously. When relations with France became more and more strained, owing to the difficulties in Egypt, Madagascar, and Siam, he even expressed a wish to co-operate as closely as possible with Germany although well aware that the other nembers of the Cabinet were urgently pressing for an agreement with France.[1] Indeed, in July, 1893, when there was danger of an Anglo-French war over the "Indo-China" dispute, Lord Rosebery spoke of the possibility of a Quadruple Alliance between England and the Triple Alliance, and at the same time sought to make Italy assert herself more energetically in her disputes with France.[2] Berlin warned Italy not to allow herself to push things too far unless adequately protected by treaty with England, so as not to be left in the lurch when the latter had gained her ends.[3] Count Hatzfeldt, German Ambassador in London, undoubtedly the ablest and most far-sighted of the liplomatists of Bismarck's school, advised asking England direct f she were prepared to join the Triple Alliance; only in that case would active support be advisable for Italy.[4]

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[1] Marschall's report of July 6th, 1891 (*Grosse Politik*, viii. 62; ix. 63).

But things never got so far. France gave in at the last noment, and so a conflict was averted. From these experiences von Marschall drew the conclusion that England was not to be rusted, and that in future none of the Powers of the Triple Alliance should undertake anything in common with England vithout a previous agreement binding on both sides.

Outwardly there was no immediate sign of the cautious and distrustful attitude of the German Government towards the Rosebery Cabinet. On November 15th, 1893, on the conclusion of the new colonial treaty which opened up the way for Germany from the Cameroons to Lake Chad and to the Chari, both Powers showed a friendly demeanour. But the pertinacity with which England adhered to her claims during the negotiations was very unpleasant, and there was no escaping the feeling that she looked askance at Germany's colonial development and did all she could to put obstacles in her way.

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[1] Hatzfeldt, May 27th, 1893 (*Grosse Politik*, viii. 101, 205).

[2] Hatzfeldt, July 26th, 1893 (*Grosse Politik*, viii. 113).

[3] Holstein, memorandum, July 27th (*Grosse Politik*, viii. 105).

[4] Hatzfeld, July 31st (*Grosse Politik*, viii. 108).

Soon, however, the differences grew more pronounced. England made difficulties for a time over the unloading in Walfish Bay of German guns which were urgently needed for suppressing the revolt in South West Africa; and she even seemed indirectly to favour the rebellion. Germany, on the other hand, showed no readiness to carry out every wish of England's in the difficulties that were constantly recurring in Egypt. A further cause of dissatisfaction at Berlin was the fact that the English authorities at Singapore had made difficulties about the recruiting of Chinese coolies for German New Guinea. Another ticklish point was the combined German, English and American suzerainty (established in 1889) over the Samoan group of islands, which had been the first objectives of Germany's colonial policy, and which she now wanted entirely for herself; but she found no support for this ambition in London. In September 1893, Hatzfeldt was instructed to tell Rosebery that Germany would feel obliged to exercise greater reserve in her general attitude toward England unless she adopted a different attitude towards Germany's colonial interests.[1] In April, 1894, in order to leave no doubt in the matter, he intimated that "advocacy of English interests must not be expected of us any longer."

The conclusion of the treaty of May 12th, 1894, without previously consulting Germany, was regarded at Berlin as a serious infringement of German interests. By this treaty England handed over to the Congo State from the ancient Egyptian empire of the Soudan—which she had no right to dispose of—the territory of Bahr-el-Ghazal which stretched westward from Fashoda in the upper valley of the Nile to the frontiers of the French Congo, receiving in return a strip of land,

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[1] Despatch to Hatzfeldt, Sept. 10th, 1893 (*Grosse Politik*, viii. 402).

25 kilometres broad, east of the Congo between Lake Tanganyika and Lake Albert Nyanza, thus restoring connection between her South African possessions and Uganda.

But this treaty had been carried through without consulting France either, who felt as much aggrieved as Germany. In view of England's previous attempt to lease a similar strip of land on the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika from us, France considered that the economic prospects of her East African colonies would be imperilled if the projected railway from the Cape to Cairo kept outside her territory and came entirely under British nfluence. She also saw a menace to the route connecting her colony on the Congo with the upper Nile, the maintenance of which was all the more vital to her that she had never abandoned her plan for the conquest of the Soudan, in compensation or Britain's occupation of Egypt. As the treaty was an nfringement of the Congo Act of 1885 to which England was one f the signatories, Germany and France agreed to make independent but similar representations. Both sent in protests and emanded the repeal of the treaty.[1]

Germany's attitude was not determined solely by the question f the Congo. Hatzfeldt had expressed himself very decisively o the effect that Lord Rosebery would not voluntarily make ny colonial concessions, especially in Samoa. As we had no ompensations to offer, a forcible occupation of the Samoan roup of islands was not advisable, in view of the co-operation f the United States and of English naval superiority. Hence he only way Hatzfeldt could see of bringing pressure to bear n England was to influence the policy of Britain's opponents, nd here the Congo Treaty offered a welcome opportunity. It was hoped that this would prove a means to force England to dopt a more accommodating attitude in other colonial matters.

The Kaiser himself expressed his indignation at England's conduct in forcible terms to Sir Edward Malet, the English mbassador. In 1890, said he, England had already wanted these strips of territory and Germany had already refused her consent. He himself later on had declined King Leopold's offer f this land out of consideration for Engand. It was the very fact that Germany's attitude in this matter was known in London which made these proceedings so objectionable. "I should be sorry," he concluded, "if on this occasion, through England's disloyal conduct towards me, I were unable willingly as heretofore to further her wishes with other States."

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[1] *Vide* the account in the French *Rapport de la commission d'enquête sur les its de la guerre*, i. 251, which requires more accurate revision in parts.

Over Near Eastern questions, also, no complete understanding could be reached. Rosebery was primarily concerned to make sure that the Triple Alliance would cover his rear if, in the event of a Russian attack on the Straits, he were compelled to send the English fleet thither. In Berlin they were afraid lest Russia should withdraw and Austria and Italy advance, as soon as the latter states had concluded binding agreements; so they warned their allies not to pledge themselves to active measures so long as England herself was not irrevocably committed. Caprivi did not believe that England would venture to send her Mediterranean fleet into the Dardanelles so long as she had the French fleet intact in her rear. In London, on the other hand, they were unwilling to move without making sure of the help of others; thus things kept moving in a circle. Rosebery asked that the Governments of the Triple Alliance Powers should at least bind themselves to use diplomatic pressure in Paris, to keep France from attacking. Austria seemed not altogether unfavourable, but Germany feared that, if this were agreed to, England, without binding herself, might claim their support for an advance as soon as she was ready to move; on the other hand, Austria and Italy, by expressing their willingness to consent, might compromise others. Also, as was justly observed, diplomatic pressure on France without the threat of war would be worthless, and it was only Germany, not Austria or Italy, that could use such language with any prospect of success. A war on two fronts, where we had nothing to gain, was far too serious a matter for us to risk for the sake of the Straits problem. England might involve us in a struggle for our existence while she herself was only risking a few dozen battleships. "If England wanted our help, let her enter into a definite engagement with the Triple Alliance in which our mutual obligations would be securely established, not only for Lord Rosebery's tenure of office, but for that of any other Government; we should then be able to attempt to prevent England concluding an isolated peace prematurely."

Baron von Marschall gave a decisive refusal to Austria's request that he should undertake the task of putting pressure on France. Hatzfeldt was informed of this on the ground that English constitutional law, as was well known, forbade the undertaking of binding engagements. " But without mutual pledges it will always remain impossible to come to an understanding on questions whose solution might conceivably involve the entire strength and existence of one of the contracting Powers. We cannot subordinate our policy to the principles of English constitutional law, nor can our Allies do so." In London attention was called to the fact that there were no signs of impending military activity on Russia's part, but should such appear it would be England's immediate concern to defend her own interests there. The most we would concede was that Austria and Italy should bind themselves to assist if England took up arms, and this could be attained by the renewal of the Mediterranean Treaty of 1887. We declined to let ourselves be coerced by Austria " into undertaking obligations which were not anticipated in the Triple Alliance Treaty." Least of all should this have been brought forward at a time when England's attitude on colonial questions rendered it desirable that she should be made to feel clearly that " there was nothing to be gained from us without some equivalent service."

Rosebery now threatened to change his entire policy, break off negotiations with the Triple Alliance and come to an understanding with Russia and France.[1] Von Marschall considered this an empty threat, as Rosebery so far had done nothing for the Triple Alliance, and it would be even easier for Germany to revise her policy towards England without injury either to herself or to her allies.[2] Rosebery also sought to bring pressure to bear on Berlin through Austria and Italy ; and Crispi actually did advocate making advances. England's co-operation with the Triple Alliance, he declared, was a vital matter for Italy, with a view to the maintenance of the balance of power in the Mediterranean. But the German Ambassador, von Bülow, reminded him of the aggressive character of Britain's African policy, and finally induced him to agree to co-operate in getting England to restore the rights which had been infringed.

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[1] Eulenburg's note, June 15th, based on Rosebery's remarks to the Austrian Ambassador in London (*Grosse Politik*, viii. 455).

[2] Despatch to Eulenburg, June 15th (*Grosse Politik*, viii. 455).

When Rosebery saw that Germany would not yield, he told the Austrian Ambassador that he had come to the conclusion that the strip of twenty-five kilometres of African territory, partly waste ground, was not of sufficient importance to England to call for a complete change of policy and came round.[1] He thereafter renounced the leased territories, and thus Germany's claims were met. Marschall showed no inclination to do anything further about the French claims in Bahr-el-Ghazal, as the arrangement with France was for parallel not for united action. In vain Hanotaux argued that Germany's wishes would not have been gratified so quickly but for England being harassed by France's simultaneous action. The Secretary of State coolly declared that Germany had simply used that circumstance as a means of exerting pressure to reach her ends more quickly; they had not said one word binding themselves with regard to the article so obnoxious to France. It was impossible to go further without humiliating England unduly. Although after prolonged negotiation France obtained the decision (August 14th) that the Congo State should renounce the Bahr-el-Ghazal, receiving only the small district of Lado on lease, the impression remained that she had been left in the lurch by Germany once the latter had secured her own ends. She felt they had been moved like a pawn on a chess-board and with French sensitiveness resented it. The conduct of German policy seemed the less intelligible as the Kaiser took every opportunity of expressing his wish for better and more friendly relations with France; and certainly it must be admitted that Marschall's conduct in this matter was not calculated to strengthen the influence at Paris of statesmen who, like Hanotaux, realised the value of a friendly co-operation with Germany.

In England, likewise, they were indignant at Germany's procedure. To them it was a humiliation to have been forced to renounce the Congo Treaty after it had been already concluded, and they entered Germany on their list of debts. The Entente between England and the Triple Alliance which had existed since 1890, although in the loosest form, had not proved advantageous. The fact that Germany appeared to favour France's penetration into the Soudan gave rise to suspicions in London. The Franco-German frontier treaty for the Cameroons in the spring of 1894 and the treaty with the Congo State on August 14th of the same year, made possible by Germany's attitude, opened France's path from the Congo to the Upper Nile and made a serious clash of interests in Central Africa inevitable. When it is taken into account that Germany, in 1893, acting in concert with the United States, frustrated Cecil Rhodes' intention of bringing entirely under his control the railway line from Pretoria to Lorenço Marques, the only important railway connection between the Boer State and a non-English seaport, and that in the autumn of 1894, German warships appeared in Delagoa Bay when England was seeking Portugal's consent to land troops there to quell a local rebellion, it is clear that in Africa the two Powers were gradually assuming the attitude of rivals watching one another distrustfully.

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[1] Eulenburg's report, June 17th (*Grosse Politik*, viii. 459).

Lord Rosebery, on succeeding Gladstone as Prime Minister, had relinquished the Foreign Office to Lord Kimberley, but he still retained the chief influence in it. In the late autumn he had a discussion with Count Hatzfeldt on matters of far-reaching mportance, the effect of which appeared in the Premier's speech at the Lord Mayor's banquet,[1] where he purposely accentuated England's good relations with Russia and France. In the negotiations about the northern frontiers of India, he had been very conciliatory to the Russians and had consented to the Russian frontier being brought much further south, so that only a narrow strip of Afghan territory now separated the rivals from the watershed of the Indus.

The Prime Minister spoke to the Ambassador regretfully of Germany's evident willingness to consort with France and questioned the permanence of the Triple Alliance. By insisting trongly on England's invulnerability and command of the sea, he wished to bring home to the Ambassador that they would do well in Berlin not to let relations cool down altogether. Hatzfeldt eplied that he had always advocated close relations between the wo Powers; but so long as England put obstacles in the way of ur colonial expansion, and so long as she avoided every obligation to support us in the event of a French or a Russian attack, she must not expect permanent reciprocal service from Germany. He regretted that England would not formally enter the Triple Alliance, which would have been the best guarantee of peace. Rosebery admitted that the Congo Treaty was a blunder ; he also agreed that if England remained isolated she might easily lose Malta and Egypt to France in the event of a big colonial war, and the Mediterranean would then become a French lake ; but he avoided any declaration as to the possibility of an alliance. Hatzfeldt gathered the impression that as Germany had not shown herself sufficiently pliable the Prime Minister would seek to get on better terms with Russia by making concessions on the Afghan frontier, and to ensure if possible that the Czar would remain neutral in the event of an Anglo-French war. Hatzfeldt spoke in a similar strain to Lord Kimberley ;[1] England grudged us everything and was only concerned to make others serve her interests without tying her own hands. Kimberley merely replied coldly that it was well known England did not join alliances.

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[1] Hatzfeldt's report, Nov. 11th, 1894 (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 153).

So this attempt to reach a better understanding had also failed. In the following months the press in England which supported the Government kept agitating for an understanding with France and Russia on all the outstanding unsettled questions —Egypt, Siam, Madagascar, the Congo, and Afghanistan. From Paris there came a friendly echo, and soon the idea of a Triple League between France, Russia and England took root there. In Germany it was not believed that these schemes would come to anything ; nevertheless English policy was viewed with a growing distrust which even found expression in the newspapers. The fact that England sought to exclude the German colony of Togo from the navigable part of the Niger, and that the economic policy of Cape Colony evidently aimed at excluding German competition and crippling the adjacent colony of German South West Africa, heightened the distrust.

Towards the end of January Marschall summed up the German view of English policy.[2] According to Rosebery's ideas, Germany is to advocate England's interests, but England is not to bind erself to anything. The sound sense of the English people ill decide if and when it is to England's interest to support ermany when she is engaged in war. So long as Germany oes not consent to this *negotium claudicans* she will be tricked. [arschall considered the plight of the British Empire in its olation very serious; its military resources were trivial, and even ne superiority of its fleet was "outside England no axiom." ut the Kaiser was in favour of keeping up intercourse with ngland, *i.e.* of keeping the path open for her to join the Triple lliance, under well-secured guarantees, in the event of a change f Government. Italy should maintain relations.[1]

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[1] Hatzfeldt's report, Nov. 22nd, 1894 (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 166).

[2] Despatch to Hatzfeldt, Nov. 16th, 1894 (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 160).

There can be no mistaking that during the year 1894 a serious strangement arose between Germany and England, which was ne outcome of the disputes concerning Africa. The full signifiance of this fact only becomes clear when we find Germany t the same time seeking eagerly to get into closer touch with ussia. On February 9th, 1894, after long negotiations, the erman-Russian tariff war was ended by a commercial treaty, and nus a serious obstacle in the path of political rapprochement as removed: but it was two changes of a personal character hich took place in the autumn of that year that gave a decisive npetus to the trend of policy in both countries.

On October 29th, Count Caprivi was dismissed and Prince [ohenlohe became Imperial Chancellor. Although Caprivi's ll was due to causes that were personal and belonged to domestic olitics it was not without its significance in our foreign policy. was Caprivi who was responsible for refusing to renew the e-insurance Treaty and for the change-over to England. He ad always been opposed to an ambitious colonial policy, and ertainly was not pleased to find our relations with England jured by the difficulties in Africa. Hohenlohe had large states in Russia, understood Russian conditions, and was osely related to the Russian Imperial family as well as to various igning families in Europe; it was therefore much easier for m to pick up the links with St. Petersburg than it had been for s predecessor. From the outset his programme was to uphold ne Triple Alliance, the primary aim of which was to preserve the territorial stability of the three Allied Sovereigns. English policy he considered undependable and prone to change according to the personality of the leading statesmen at the time. In one of his first conversations with the Kaiser the question of the Near East was discussed. The Kaiser expressed his opinion that Austria's desire to oppose Russia's wish for the free passage of her warships through the Dardanelles could not be entertained. We had no interest in risking for that the bones of a single grenadier, he said, borrowing Bismarck's famous phrase. Russia required the key of the house for her fleet, but that was a matter of no consequence to us; Austria might act on her own responsibility in the matter. Hohenlohe noted these indications and shaped his policy accordingly.

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[1] Metternich's report of a conversation with the Kaiser, Dec. 20th, 1894 *rosse Politik*, ix. 182).

On November 1st, Alexander III. died. Gloomy and reserved in temperament, suspicious of everyone, intimidated and embittered by the memory of his father's assassination, he had let himself be convinced by the Old Russian Party that his own safety and the future happiness of his people could only be secured, for religious and national reasons, by an uncompromising autocracy. His Pan-Slav ideas, too, strengthened with the years. He regarded himself as the champion of Pan-Slavism throughout the world, and viewed with aversion and fear the development of Germany, which he came to regard more and more as the main obstacle to the realisation of Pan-Slav hopes. Such were his views when he finally signed the alliance with France, and only with difficulty could he have been won back to a closer understanding with Germany.

His son, Nicholas II., was a young man of no intellectual distinction, but sincerely desirous of peace and extremely conscientious. Diligent but without much will power, easily accessible, from lack of self-confidence, to personal influences among those surrounding him, formed by nature for a tranquil and honourable private life, the responsibilities of his gigantic empire weighed on him like a crushing burden; and this explains his ever more and more complete surrender to mystical and spiritualistic tendencies. He felt himself constantly watched by spies and traitors, and always breathed more freely when he left behind the sultry atmosphere of his own palaces and laid aside his cares for a time on foreign soil or on the wide seas.

le was from the first more sympathetic towards Germany than lexander III. had been. Perhaps he himself would not have oncluded the alliance with France, but as it was a legacy from is revered father he was determined to uphold it honestly, but ithout going a step beyond its stipulations.

He had already, when heir to the throne, made the ac-uaintance of the Kaiser, and had been greatly impressed and ttracted by his charming, cheerful, often somewhat boisterous ature, and by his ingenuous egotism, so unlike his own retiring isposition. A personal intercourse had grown up between the vo cousins which could hardly be considered a real friendship, ut yet was something considerably more than the usual cere-ionious relations between royal personages. With the Kaiser, ho often spoke somewhat disrespectfully of "Nicky's" mental ipacity, there was from the beginning more political calculation ian personal sentiment, but for a long time the Czar was ominated by the feeling of having found a wise and trust-orthy relative, his equal in birth and rank, with whom he could y aside Russia and her intrigues and speak frankly as man to an.

In any case this change of Sovereign held out the best prospect renewing the old dynastic intimacy between the courts of erlin and St. Petersburg. The interchange of private letters id telegrams in English between the two sovereigns, which gan with the Kaiser writing a letter of sympathy on the death Alexander III., was carried on almost to the outset of the World 'ar and attained considerable political significance.[1] The olitically important parts of the German letters and telegrams, pecially in later years, were sometimes discussed with the sponsible leaders of policy; in certain cases they were drawn in the Foreign Office, and sometimes, indeed, even suggested criticised by the Ambassadors. Frequently, however, they were itten entirely by the Kaiser, and their contents were not mmunicated even to the Imperial Chancellor. The Czar's plies also were not always placed in the archives. This

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[1] Goetz' edition of the Letters of Wilhelm II. to the Czar, 1894-1914 (1920). e Czar's replies are not given nor the equally important exchange of opinions telegram. A complete edition is urgently needed. For further valuable ormation for the years 1904-1907, *vide Documents from the Russian Secret chives*, published by the Foreign Office, 1918, p. 355.

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correspondence inaugurated a new phase in German-Russian relations.

Although Nicholas II.'s accession to the throne gave the apparent external impulse, it is doubtful whether the Kaiser would have acted with such promptitude if he had not been forced closer to Russia by the cooling down of the friendship with England. There was certainly also a desire to loosen the Franco-Russian Entente or at least to prevent it from becoming too firm. This aim certainly was not completely realised. Russia welcomed Germany's advances, but since the conclusion of the French alliance, the old relations could not again be restored. It was felt at St. Petersburg that England's attitude and especially the uneasiness caused by the Franco-Russian friendship, had driven Germany to this attempt to renew relations. Should a tool that worked so quickly and satisfactorily be rejected ?

The first five years of the new diplomacy left Germany bereft of the old Bismarckian system of skilfully coupled assurances of peace, now all rendered unserviceable through the failure of the Russian link. She had sought compensation in strengthening the ties with England, which Bismarck too had wanted, but only subject to the maintenance of good relations with Russia at the same time ; but it had turned out to be much more difficult than had been expected to make any lasting impression in London. Opposition over colonial matters in Africa brought on an estrangement. For the first time the general situation of Germany was appreciably influenced by friction outside Europe ; within Europe there was neither antagonism nor any serious difference of opinion between Germany and England. The feeling of distrust towards English policy rested really on the fear that Britain would let the other states take all the risks for her in the East and then leave them in the lurch ; but the actual cause of the estrangement lay in the German contention that England was determined to put every conceivable obstacle in the way of her colonial development. Under the influence of this disappointment Germany sought to come closer to Russia, but found the situation so much altered by the Franco-Russian alliance that a simple return to the old conditions was no longer possible.

The other members of the Triple Alliance were uneasy at the
strangement with England. Austria saw in Britain her natural
ıpporter against Russian ambitions in Constantinople; Italy from
ıe outset had stipulated that in no circumstances would she
ledge herself to fight against England. She felt herself depen-
ent on Britain both economically and in a military sense, and a
ood understanding between Britain and the Triple Alliance
ad been a condition of her joining it. Now critics were making
ıemselves heard south of the Alps and asking whether the
riple Alliance was economically sound, or whether the heavy
ilitary burdens were not solely a product of the circumstances
ıduced by the Treaty? Already little cracks and fissures
ere beginning to appear in the ramparts raised by Bismarck.

Nevertheless, the situation of Germany in the opening months
1895 was highly favourable. There were at that time three
olitical elements in Europe, the Triple Alliance, the Dual Alliance,
ıd isolated England. England's differences with each of the
artners of the Dual Alliance were so acute that there was little
robability of agreement among these opponents; and thus the
riple Alliance, at the head of which stood Germany, became
ıe pivot on which depended the balance of power in Europe.

Germany was estranged from France by ancient enmity and
om England by colonial differences, but she had nevertheless
ot on better terms with Russia, and had even stood shoulder to
ıoulder with France in the Congo question; Austria and Italy
ad always remained on close terms with England, because
aly distrusted France, and Austria Russia. In this way the
riple Alliance had connections on both sides. It was natural
r Germany to exploit the situation for her own benefit. The
ismarckian policy had always sought to utilise existing circum-
ances in order to maintain peace and to strengthen Germany's
sition in Europe: the aim of the new diplomacy, however, was
develop Germany's colonial empire. Hence the attractive
ıt dangerous opportunity of cultivating whichever of the two
eat political adversaries offered most advantages. We have
ready seen more than once how Germany attempted to bargain
th England. Even the improved relations with Russia were
ploited in this way. In the report of March 8th, 1894, already
ıoted, the following occurs: "On the other hand Russia has

need of us if she means to pursue a peaceful path, and will not refuse some service in return." There was just a chance that some means of reconciling Russian and Austrian interests might be found which would lay for ever the dread spectre of a war on both fronts. About this time, indeed, Caprivi called for a report on the question of what we could ask as compensation in such circumstances: he thought of economic advantages in Turkey, and even wondered if we might not secure "a territory for colonisation in Asia Minor." The danger of this strategy was that it made our general policy depend on temporary gains in distant fields; if you always favour the one who makes the higher offer you must ultimately come to be regarded as unreliable, and this, in the long run, is not profitable for any State.

# III. SHIMONOSEKI

In the spring of 1895 the Great Powers were forced to take notice of events occurring in a part of the world hitherto little considered. The war that had broken out in the previous summer between Japan and China gave the impetus to a far-reaching revolution in international relations and in the whole political system of the world. The course of the war led European states to the unpleasant discovery that a new and powerful military power had sprung up in Eastern Asia and claimed a leading position for herself in this part of the world.

In June, 1894, China and Japan landed troops in Korea, where disturbances had taken place. Out of this grew the war between the two Asiatic Powers. In September the Chinese were driven from Korea. On October 25th, the Japanese crossed the Yalu and began an advance in the direction of Pekin. A second Japanese army landed on the south of the peninsula of Liaotung in the Yellow Sea, and in the beginning of November occupied Talienwan and Port Arthur. Operations then came for a time to a standstill. In February, 1895, the Japanese captured Wei-hai-wei as well as the Chinese warships lying in the harbour, and on March 4th they occupied the important seaport of Newchwang. Risings took place in the adjacent provinces. China, now seriously crippled, was no longer in a position to bar the road to Pekin and sued for peace.

Of all the great powers Russia and England had naturally taken the closest interest in these events. Although distrustful of one another they tried to intervene jointly, but without success. At the beginning of October, England proposed to the other Powers that they should first take measures for the protection of the life and property of Europeans, and then make a general intervention in which the United States of America also should take part. Japan was to receive compensation for her war costs and Korea was to be made an independent state, under guarantee of the Great Powers. When questioned what would happen should Japan decline these terms, Lord Bertie, of the English Foreign Office, suggested, in the first place, a demonstration by the fleet to be followed up by united "action" by the Powers, but soon after retracted these remarks, evidently on Rosebery's advice, and said they should simply offer friendly counsels. Russia was not against this, but Germany was not in favour of it, as she declared Japan would probably decline. As England hesitated about acting alone with Russia, no united action was taken, and this was rightly ascribed in Tokio to Germany's unsympathetic attitude.[1]

In November China requested the Powers to intervene. England again advocated united action, Russia hesitated, Germany again declined, on the ground that it was scarcely likely that Japan would accept the concessions made by China which were similar to the earlier English proposals.[2]

In February, 1895, China renewed her appeal for help. England, Russia and France sought to induce Japan to state her terms. Germany held aloof from this step.

Early in March it was learned in Berlin through the Japanese Ambassador, Viscount Aoki, that Japan would demand (what had hitherto been merely surmised),[3] in addition to the independence of Korea, a war indemnity, the cession of Formosa with the adjacent islands, and of the southern half of the Liaotung peninsula. Germany now suddenly decided to emerge from her watchful seclusion and, without informing the other Powers, to counsel Japan to exercise restraint. On March 6th instructions to that effect were sent to the German Ambassador in Tokio, Herr von Gutschmid. "The European Powers," so ran the telegram, "are asked by China to intervene. Some of them are willing, and are agreed as to the essentials. The more they claim from China as the price of their intervention the less remains for Japan. Hence for the latter Power a reasonable settlement made without the aid of others is proportionately more advantageous. According to our recent information, Japan's request for the cession of territory on the mainland is peculiarly calculated to provoke intervention."

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[1] Metternich, October 4th, 9th, 12th; English note of October 7th; Marschall's note of October 9th; German circular letter of October 14th (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 242-244).

[2] Hatzfeldt, November 7th; Kimberley's note, November 9th; Marschall's report of a conversation with the Chinese Ambassador, November 11th and 12th.

[3] On Nov. 29th Gutschmid had already mentioned the expected Japanese demands (German circular letter, March 10th).

This warning was delivered on March 8th. The Japanese expressed their thanks for this friendly information and added that their demands would not be high. Nevertheless they did not let it influence their attitude in the direct peace negotiations with China which began on March 18th, at Shimonoseki.

Before making their terms known they requested an armistice, the evacuation of the Taku forts, of the harbour of Tientsin, and of the railway from there to Shanhaikwan. Again China telegraphed to the Powers appealing for help. On England's suggestion all the representatives of the Great Powers, including Germany, were advised to support China's request for an immediate statement of the terms of peace, as that was not unreasonable. At the last moment, however, the English Ambassador received a counter instruction and hence took no part in this proceeding.

Both at Berlin and St. Petersburg this action on England's part was looked upon as disloyal, but it was really due to the fact that they had been quicker in London to discover that such a step was no longer necessary. The attempt by a Japanese on March 24th to assassinate Li Hung Chang, the head of the Chinese Peace Mission, was used by the Japanese Government as a pretext to grant an immediate armistice without insisting upon compliance with the military conditions previously laid down. Japan at once made known her peace terms—a war indemnity, the cession of Formosa, the Fisher Islands, Port Arthur and the adjoining part of Manchuria as far as 41 degrees north latitude, also the revision of the treaty of commerce with a view to the further exclusion of foreign trade from China.

China besought the Powers to obtain some modification of these terms. The moment for decision had arrived for the Powers. Should Japan be allowed to acquire a large piece of territory on the Asiatic continent? Should China be left to her fate? Should some compensation be demanded so that Japan might not become too powerful?

Russia had watched the progress of Japan from the very first with deep anxiety, but had avoided any definite action. In January, 1895, M. de Giers died. For several weeks the office of Foreign Secretary was vacant, and it was only on March 11th that Prince Lobanov was appointed. During the interval there was no effective control and the one idea was to avoid complications. Russia was apparently content to look on quietly while Japan demanded the cession of territories, provided the effective independence of Korea were guaranteed. On March 20th, when the German representative remarked that Japan would probably demand territory on the mainland, Lobanov replied that he hoped they would be able to remain neutral in spite of all. Notwithstanding this, there was a war party in St. Petersburg which favoured immediate attack. But even in military circles they were not without anxiety as to the success of any possible warlike operations, for there was no naval base and no safe harbour of refuge for the fleet, and the Siberian Railway was not nearly ready. Russia was above all else unwilling to proceed alone, not knowing how the other Powers might act. She could rely on France as her new ally. But what about England? Would she not seize the opportunity, while Russia was involved in a struggle with Japan, to bring the old disputes to a head?

England, as we have seen, tried at the beginning of the war to arrange terms. Her fear was that a further advance of the Japanese might bring about the fall of the Manchu Dynasty and the collapse of the Chinese Empire, which would probably result in anarchy in the East, highly detrimental to European trade. Nor was this all, for behind loomed a struggle of the Great Powers for their share in the territories of the Middle Kingdom, deprived of its ruler, with consequences that no one could foresee. It was desired to avoid all this and to maintain China as a bulwark against Russian influence in Eastern Asia. When Japan's successes kept on growing in magnitude, Lord Kimberley began to fear the formation of a powerful Asiatic empire under Japanese hegemony and the exclusion of Europeans from the economic development of these fruitful lands. But here again nothing was done until it was known what Russia meant to do. After repeated conversations with Lord Kimberley, Count Hatzfeldt came to the conclusion that England would not act alone, that she had no desire for any extension of territory in Eastern Asia, but that naturally enough, if other Powers were to make claims she would also seek her share.[1]

For a long time back public opinion in England had been taking quite a different direction. The victories of the Japanese and the innate strength which they had revealed had produced a profound impression. The English commercial classes found their original fears not confirmed. Business had suffered very little. The victorious Japanese had given repeated assurances that the further development of China promised great economic advantages for the trade of all nations. Was it prudent therefore to alienate unnecessarily the rising power in Eastern Asia? There never was much inclination in England for military adventures, and was there not here a danger of merely furthering the schemes of Russia, their political opponent? It was very doubtful whether the Rosebery Cabinet, whose hold on Parliament was far from secure, could long withstand this change in public opinion.

Nor was Russia able to look for much support from Germany. We had some not inconsiderable economic interests in Eastern Asia, but we were not one of the participating Powers with direct political interests there, and that is the real explanation of Germany's original attitude of reserve. The Kaiser had watched Japan's victorious advance with the liveliest sympathy. As a soldier he admired her excellent military and administrative services, and the willing spirit of sacrifice shown both by people and Parliament won his respect. Japan's attitude at the negotiations he considered reasonable and her demands far from excessive. But German statesmen were somewhat anxious lest Japan's encroachment on the mainland should give rise to compensation claims from the European powers at China's expense, and considered whether it would not be highly beneficial for Germany's commercial interests in Eastern Asia as well as for her position as a World Power, that she should secure a share there too.

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[1] Hatzfeldt, March 24th, April 3rd, 4th, 6th and 9th, of which there is a selection in *Grosse Politik*, ix. 262 and 264.

The Kaiser himself in the late autumn had been hoping to obtain Formosa.[1] In naval circles they had long wished to have a base for the fleet in Eastern waters. Now there was a possisility of obtaining it; and if England became more deeply embroiled and were obliged to consider Germany they might also get the Samoan question settled in the way they had so long desired. In February, 1895, Hatzfeldt had to find out in London whether England would raise difficulties if Germany claimed a share in the event of a territorial dismemberment of China. To this Lord Kimberley vouchsafed no comment, but neither did he offer any protest. Hatzfeldt advised them at Berlin to think definitely as to what they would demand should the opportunity arise. They thought of one of the Chinese islands or Kiao-Chow. Marschall, however, hoped that no such occupation of Chinese territory by the European Powers would come about, as Germany had quite enough problems on hand as it was. On no account would they themselves give the "signal for the partitioning of Chinese territory among the great Powers." Only in the event of other parties claiming special privileges would they demand "equivalent compensations."

Hatzfeldt received orders to say in London that we confidently hoped to stand side by side with England in this matter. If the Powers desired Germany's participation in an intervention, she would have to know what advantages were to be expected, corresponding to the sacrifices entailed. Lord Kimberley was not communicative; he merely observed that there was no intention of excluding Germany from the further settlement of these questions. Our Ambassador consequently did not judge it advisable to enter into more remote eventualities.

England's reserve strengthened the feeling in Berlin that it would be better not to open up the whole question of compensations. It was principally for this reason that we advised Japan early in March, as we know, to give up any idea of territorial acquisitions on the mainland. However, when it became evident some weeks later that Japan persisted in her demands in spite of this warning, the German Government changed its attitude. There may have been some soreness over Japan's refusal to comply with our advice, but the real reason was the fear lest the embarrassments caused by Japan's wishes should lead to territorial aggressions by the European Powers and eventually to serious complications. It was hoped either to prevent this or, if that were impossible, to secure some compensation. In the middle of March, the Imperial Chancellor laid these views before the Kaiser in an exhaustive report on the subject. He held that we ought to avoid intervening prematurely in these matters, but rather to keep open the possibility of taking a part in any enterprises that might lead to a postponement of the intervention of the Powers in Eastern Asia. England was manifestly desirous of our participation as a counterpoise to France and Russia. What we could ask must depend upon the demands of the other Powers. This line of argument met with the Kaiser's approval.[1] As no opposition had been offered in London to the plans suggested by Hatzfeldt, an attempt was then made to find out exactly the current of opinion at St. Petersburg. An exchange of views was suggested, with the prospect of eventually acting with Russia (March 23rd).

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[1] Telegram from the Kaiser to the Imperial Chancellor, Nov. 17th, 1894 (*Grosse Politik*, viii. 245).

The Czar and Lobanov expressed their great pleasure at this communication and passed it on to London in the hope of inducing the Government there to join with them. In London they were much amazed that Germany had not directly informed England of her change of views; but they did not let themselves be driven out of their persistent reserve. And so, for the present, Russia did nothing further to bring about the exchange of opinions. In the beginning of April, Japan's official demands had become known. Marschall felt increasingly anxious. Port Arthur, he declared, might become the Gibraltar of the Yellow Sea. Japan would acquire a sort of protectorate over China, and the question of European compensations would now become real and might endanger the peace of Europe. He would not formulate any definite demands until he knew what the others meant to do. "Germany," he wrote on April 5th to Hatzfeldt, "is only following in this question the twofold aim of preventing a union of the Yellow Races with Japan at their head, and at the same time of reducing the friction between

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[1] Hohenlohe's report with comments by the Kaiser, March 19th (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 253).

England and Russia to a minimum." It would be best if Japan would cut down her demands, as all claims for compensations would then cease. He was haunted by the fear lest Russia, England and France should come to an understanding about compensations and Germany should be left empty-handed. As the English Government refused to be drawn he again pressed at St. Petersburg for an exchange of opinions.[1]

Lobanov realised that now was the time to act if Japan were to be prevented from establishing herself on the continent of Asia. On April 8th, after having sounded the other great Powers, he broached the question of taking common action at Tokio. The occupation of Port Arthur was to be represented in courteous terms as an obstacle to good relations between China and Japan, and as a lasting threat to peace in Eastern Asia.[2] Perhaps at St. Petersburg they did not expect much success from this effort, but at least the replies from the Powers would show what support they were prepared to lend. In England, in anticipation of some such step, a Cabinet Council had been called for April 8th, at which it was decided that "the interests of England in Eastern Asia were not sufficiently affected by the Japanese terms of peace to justify intervention which presumably could only be carried out by force." Participation in the action suggested by Russia was therefore declined.

On the other hand, on April 8th, the German Government expressed its willingness—the Kaiser having repeatedly voiced his consent—to instruct its Ambassador at Tokio to submit the statement as desired, the Kaiser adding the words in his own handwriting, "if necessary even without England." Thereby we committed ourselves along with Russia to the task of curbing the victorious Japanese.

We already know the motives which induced our statesmen to disapprove of Japan's demands, and the Kaiser, although he had found the Japanese terms when submitted to him "not excessive," soon changed his mind when they conjured up for him the spectre of the Yellow Peril. In his lively imagination it took on a form as grandiose as it was grotesque. Now in the war in Eastern Asia he saw the prelude to the great struggle between the white and yellow races, between Christianity and Buddhism. Already in imagination he saw armies of yellow soldiers and fleets of ironclads, stronger than all the European forces together, setting themselves in array, overrunning and overthrowing our ancient Europe. Hence he too was now of the opinion that we should not allow Japan to become so powerful. Russia must be helped, he said, if she opposed the Japanese demands. "If openly supported by us, Russia will carry out our wishes; England, even in the most favourable circumstances, will only seek to make use of us and drop us when it suits herself."[1]

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[1] Note on Aoki's communication, April 2nd (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 260). Despatches to Tchirschky, April 4th; to Hatzfeldt, April 4th, 5th and 6th (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 261).

[2] Marschall's instructions, April 8th. The Imperial Chancellor's report to the Kaiser on April 8th. Neither of these is in *Grosse Politik*.

A final decision was soon reached when Herr von Brandt, a former German Ambassador at Pekin, arrived in Berlin. At Hatzfeldt's suggestion he had been summoned from his country seat in Wiesbaden on account of his exceptional knowledge of Eastern affairs. In several memoranda and in an interview with the Kaiser on April 9th, he unfolded his ideas. He too painted the Yellow Peril in gloomy colours, recalled the deeds of the Turks and Mongolians in the early centuries and advocated united action on the part of all European Powers, free from considerations of special advantage. He spoke warning words about Japan's organisation of industry in Eastern Asia and the extent to which the competition of her products would affect the industrial centres of Europe. To him the immediate danger was the possibility of an alliance between Japan and England for controlling and exploiting Eastern Asia. Russia he regarded as the strongest protection against the Mongolian race, hence the construction of a railway through Manchuria must be facilitated. Once the Japanese fleet was destroyed, Japan ceased to be a danger to the Continent. If China were saved from losses she might be induced to cede or lease a base and a coaling-station for the fleet.[2]

These remarks confirmed the Emperor in his views. He and his Chancellor were aware that in certain circumstances they must be prepared to use force if Japan showed any inclination "to get up on her hind legs." Serious resistance they considered out of the question. "If there had been much at stake, we would have gone about the thing more circumspectly" said von Marschall. At first they still hoped at Berlin that England would join them and were astonished at her refusal. In spite of the urgent representations of the Russian, German and French ambassadors, Lord Kimberley, save for a brief hesitation, maintained that the decision they had come to could not be altered, though England would not work against the schemes of the other Powers.

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[1] Comment of the Kaiser's on April 6th. Comment of the Kaiser's on a despatch from Vienna on April 7th. Draft of the Imperial Chancellor of his proposal on April 8th (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 351).

[2] Brandt's account of his audience with the Kaiser on April 9th. Hatzfeldt, April 3rd (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 265, 267).

England's defection was keenly felt in Paris. The French could not well withdraw from the concerted action desired by Russia without dangerous risk to the alliance they had achieved with such toil. But if they joined with her they might find themselves bound to fight shoulder to shoulder with the hated Germans in Eastern Asia, just when the latter were preparing to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the victories of 1870. A woeful plight truly! But at all costs Russia must not be left in the lurch, and so they must be prepared to act in common even with Germany.

It was highly doubtful if the three remaining Powers would take any concerted action for the present. China was at once informed of what was intended, evidently with a view to induce her to look favourably on possible claims for compensation. She declined to accept the Japanese conditions. Japan, who, of course, knew through England what was being done, reduced the amount of money demanded and dropped her claim for the portion of Manchuria bordering the peninsula of Liaotung on the north, but insisted categorically on the modified terms being accepted within three days. China hesitated; but no intervention of the Powers occurring within this brief respite, on April 17th Li Hung Chang signed the Peace of Shimonoseki.

On the same day Prince Lobanov sent for the German envoy and informed him that Russia still intended to make a friendly attempt to induce Japan to desist from any permanent occupation of the Asiatic Continent, and in this he counted on the support of Germany and France. If Japan refused, military measures would then be considered, with the immediate severance of ocean communication between the island of Japan and the mainland. From Berlin came the reply, that corresponding instructions had been sent to the German Ambassador in Tokio. The German Admiral in Chinese waters received orders to co-operate with the Russians. England was also summoned to join the others, but Lord Kimberley declared that the advice to Japan was useless unless accompanied by military measures, which England would not consider under any circumstances.[1]

The directions to Herr von Gutschmid, German Ambassador in Tokio, ordered him in the event of the Russian and French Ambassadors making the statement suggested, to express similar views. For his guidance he was also told that Japan's excessive demands injured European and German interests, although the latter to a lesser extent. " We are now therefore compelled to join in the protest and shall if needful act with due effect. Japan ought to yield as a struggle with three Great Powers is hopeless." If Japan cared for a Conference as the least humiliating way of yielding, the Ambassador was at once to telegraph, a sign to him that the Imperial Government wished to avoid any unnecessary humiliation of Japan.

The instructions for the French Ambassador in Tokio were delayed till April 23rd, a fresh proof of the opposition in Paris to the whole proceeding. At the preliminary discussions of the three Ambassadors as to the means of carrying out their task, Herr von Gutschmid, no friend of the Japanese, proved himself an unsparing critic. As doyen of the diplomatic corps he declined to speak first and insisted that the order of precedence should correspond with the interests involved—Russia first, then France and Germany. But while the Russian and French Ambassadors were instructed to be as courteous and conciliatory as possible in making their communication, Herr von Gutschmid declared that he did not agree with that view and would act according to his instructions. None of the three Ambassadors expected any immediate success for this step.

The move was made on April 23rd. The three Ambassadors called in succession on Baron Hayashi, who was taking the place of the absent Viscount Mutsu. The Russian and French envoys proffered their advice in conciliatory but explicit terms without making direct threats. Herr von Gutschmid followed with a similar declaration, but, faithful to the instructions he had received, added, as the official expression of the standpoint of the German Government, the threat of the "requisite pressure," and the statement that Japan ought to yield, as a struggle with three Great Powers was hopeless. At the request of the Japanese Ambassador he even sent in a written copy of his speech. He omitted the hint as to a Conference, which would have allowed Japan to make a dignified retreat, and communicated it separately later on. He evidently wished to avoid impairing the drastic effect of his mission in any way. Highly pleased with himself he telegraphed the news, concluding with the remark, "my speech made a palpable impression." To the Japanese Minister's query if the Powers would raise difficulties against a temporary occupation of territory on the mainland until the costs of the war had been defrayed, the Ambassadors returned an evasive answer. Baron Hayashi considered the German declaration a bitter insult to Japan and only let himself be apparently somewhat appeased by explanatory remarks through the interpreter and well meant statements from the Ambassador to the effect that it was all only meant for Japan's good and to bring home to her the seriousness of the situation.[1]

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[1] Tschirschky, April 17th (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 296). Despatch to Tschirschky, April 17th. Telegram from the Kaiser to the Czar, April 17th (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 272-274).

Undoubtedly in this instance, the overzealousness and prejudice of an experienced official proved highly detrimental to the German Empire. It would have corresponded better with Marschall's wishes if our representative had kept as much as possible in the background. It was not for us to show ourselves less tolerant than Russia and France, for no one could say whether co-operation with Japan might not be desirable some day. By adopting a harsher tone than the other Ambassadors and by being the only one to use the actual word "war," Herr von Gutschmid wounded Japan's self-respect to the quick. Although after the first involuntary outburst, Baron Hayashi and the other Japanese statesmen, with oriental immobility, hid their feelings deep in their inmost hearts, and behaved outwardly, during the actual audience, and even later on, as friends of Germany, yet the memory of this deliberate humiliation was never forgotten and made itself felt long years afterwards. Undoubtedly Japan's attitude at the outbreak of the World War was largely due to Germany's behaviour at the Peace of Shimonoseki.

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[1] Gutschmid's reports, April 19th, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 26th (which reached Berlin on May 26th). The telegrams did not give a complete picture. Criticism of his proceedings in Marschall's circular letter of June 4th (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 274-280).

Nevertheless it is necessary to avoid exaggerating the effects of the Ambassador's personal blunder, regrettable as it was. Even had the commission been carried out accurately and with the utmost courtesy, it was bound to leave behind it a deep dislike for Germany. As it was, Japan regarded the intrusion of the Powers as a painful crippling of her well-earned triumphs. Hayashi declared it was the most untoward incident in the modern history of Japan, not excepting the newly ended war. They could understand Russia, as the immediate neighbour of the Chinese Empire, feeling threatened by the terms of peace, and could make allowance for France feeling that she must support her ally, but they utterly failed to see what German interests had been injured. They had always been on the best of terms with Germany. Many Japanese had studied there and served in her army; in all the various fields of labour German instructors had themselves worked in Japan and in numerous instances German methods had been adopted. No attempt had been made to hamper German commerce and industry. Why therefore did Germany range herself in this unintelligible way by the side of Russia, Japan's most powerful opponent in world politics? Early in March Germany had sent Japan a friendly warning of the intentions of the other Powers to intervene, but had said not a word about taking umbrage at Japan's terms. Hayashi frankly declared he was not prepared for this. The German Government further contributed to this ill-feeling by giving notice in Pekin, evidently with a view to winning China's good-will when the question of compensations came up, that they themselves had been the prime movers in suggesting united action by the Powers in favour of the Celestial Empire. That was not strictly accurate, as it was an exchange of opinions, not definite measures, that had been proposed. In any case it was injudicious, as Chinese discretion could not be depended upon. Later on when we find Germany quoted as the moving force in this incident the reference is to this communication, although at the same time there were similar suspicions of Russia in Tokio. The truth of the matter is that in March Germany only aimed at an exchange of opinions among the Powers, but early in April, by giving her consent to the course proposed by Russia she greatly facilitated matters for the Czar's government. It is doubtful whether, without being sure of Germany's support, Russia would have ventured on this step with France alone. Germany had originally counted on common action by all the Powers; but when England refused to co-operate, she had immediately decided to range herself with Russia. Here again the dominant motive was the wish at any cost to prevent Russia and France together from securing a success which would strengthen the Dual Alliance and might prove its baptism of fire.[1] The Kaiser wished to show the Czar that in Eastern Asia he might look for better support from him than from his dilatory French allies. Possibly, too, he hoped that Russia's intervention might lead to the establishment of better relations with France, at which he had long been aiming.

Meanwhile, a further goal had come into view, at first only in vague outline, later on in clear and definite form. On April 9th, the Kaiser remarked to Herr von Brandt that Russia's preoccupation in East Asia might perhaps lead to some relief on our eastern frontier. During the following weeks he became more and more convinced that the Czar's policy in the Far East was bound sooner or later to end in war with Japan. Hence would it not be prudent to encourage Russia in this direction so as to divert her attention from the Near East and give her a keen interest in keeping France quiet? The Kaiser was constantly impressing upon the Czar that it was his appointed task to protect Europe from the yellow races. In his letter of April 26th he promised to cover his rear, so that no one could hinder his activity in the Far East. Later on he sent him the well-known picture, painted by Knackfuss at his request, in which the nations of Europe are represented symbolically meeting the onset of hordes of Asia under the leadership of Buddha. The Kaiser added as motto, "Nations of Europe, defend your most sacred possessions!" When told that the Czar had expressed his delight with the picture and had had it specially framed, he remarked, well satisfied, "So it worked all right: that is very satisfactory."[1] Certainly he privately believed that in the coming war with Japan, Russia would be victorious, but he also hoped that the struggle would absorb the entire forces of both Powers for a long time. The following quotation from an outline of national policy sketched by the Kaiser at the end of July 1895 shows this most clearly. "We must try," he says, "to nail Russia down in Eastern Asia, so that she may occupy herself less with Europe and the Near East." She must be "pushed forward" as the defender of the Cross, he declared, as the shield of civilization in the Far East. Again the remark was repeated that Germany would cover the Russian rear in Europe, but only for "equivalent concessions." As such the Kaiser considered the reduction of Russian troops on the German frontier and Russia's co-operation in obtaining for Germany a harbour in Eastern Asia, once she herself had extended her territory there.[2]

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[1] Brandt's memorandum, April 9th. Witte at St. Petersburg expressed similar sentiments. Cp. also Holstein's private letter to Hatzfeldt on April 28th (omitted in the *Grosse Politik*), where he declares that an effort must be made to get into touch again with Japan, and therefore Germany's action must be represented as being in Japan's interests. Japan must give way, for the first European gunshot would mean that she lost everything. He then adds, "the emergency coalition, Russia—Germany—France, would acquire through successful comradeship in arms a permanent character such as the French Chauvinists are even now predicting. The English Government must consider this while the decision still rests with her." He evidently believed that Japan would be practically guided by England's counsels; for the rest, he himself was doubtful lest a permanent connection with Russia and France might injure the Triple Alliance, and hence he wished to avoid fighting together in the Far East.

We shall frequently, in the Kaiser's transactions, come across the curious mixture of political sentimentality and calculation that is shown here.

These reflections have carried us rather too far. Japan hesitated for some time about her answer, and appealed to the Czar asking him to renounce his demands, but in vain. Herr von Gutschmid in his zeal pressed for a prompt reply, although the Russian Ambassador, in default of instructions, declined to join him in this step (April 27th). This naturally increased Japan's anger with Germany. Marschall sharply reprimanded him for this afterwards, but that was of no avail. On May 1st, Japan offered to accept the southern part of Liao-Tung on which Port Arthur lay, with an increased money indemnity. In St. Petersburg and Berlin this concession was not considered sufficient. Russia had already proposed an ultimatum with a time-limit when Japan on May 5th consented to relinquish absolutely all territorial gains on the continent of Asia in exchange for a money indemnity; but the Emperor of China must first ratify unconditionally the treaty of Shimonoseki. On Germany's urgent advice the Chinese Emperor signed the treaty on May 8th, and at once appealed to Tokio for a modification of the conditions.

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[1] Comment on Radolin's despatch of October 13th, 1895. Cp. also Moltke's report with regard to the drawing, October, 1895 (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 365).

[2] Report of Freiherr v. Rothenhan's conversation with the Kaiser on July 30th.

In St. Petersburg they were greatly relieved to find things running so smoothly. They had contemplated a war, as we know, with considerable misgiving. Prince Lobanov thanked the German Ambassador in extravagant terms on Russia's behalf. This great success was the first important event in the reign of Nicholas II.: Germany had helped him to secure it and had done a great service for the maintenance of the peace of the world. He had already informed the German Government that so long as the Kaiser Wilhelm adhered to his present policy, Russia would guarantee peace on the German frontier. The Czar himself thanked the Kaiser and promised him his support if he wished to obtain a base in Eastern Asia, an assurance he renewed repeatedly to the Imperial Chancellor who visited him in St. Petersburg in September.[1]

But these grateful sentiments quickly disappeared. In the long-drawn-out negotiations for the modification of the terms of peace, Russia, in deference to France's wishes, sought to compel

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[1] The Czar's answer to the Kaiser's letter of April 26th, is not among the documents in the Foreign Office. As to its contents the Kaiser wrote on August 31st to Hohenlohe: "As you know I had already this spring, in anticipation, secured from the Czar his written consent to the occupation of a Chinese base." Hohenlohe wrote to the Kaiser from St. Petersburg on September 12th, that the Czar had told him that "he had already written to your Majesty he would offer no opposition if your Majesty made a territorial acquisition in Eastern Asia; the stipulation that Russia also should receive something was not mentioned." (*Grosse Politik*, ix. 360.) Cp. also Hohenlohe, ***Denkwürdigkeiten***, ii. 521

Japan to renounce the Fisher Islands, at least to reduce the indemnity and shorten the time for evacuation, besides imposing all sorts of hampering restrictions on Japan's status in the ceded islands. Unwilling to embitter the Japanese still further, Germany refused to support these fresh demands, but had finally to consent in the matter of the indemnity. There were some stormy scenes during the course of these discussions, but a bitter after-taste was left when Russia, at France's request, excluded German banks from the large loan which was floated to enable the Chinese to pay their war indemnity. Prince Lobanov in the most arrogant manner, requested Germany's unconditional subservience in East Asiatic matters. He hoped, he said, that she attached more value to Russia's friendship than to Japan's. The representatives of Germany's policy would have preferred to withdraw at this juncture, but they hesitated to leave France as Russia's only helper lest these two might garner in the fruits of the undertaking that they had all begun together; and so they held on. Finally an agreement was reached between Japan and the three intervening Powers whereby she bound herself not to cede the islands she had acquired to any other Power, to avoid hampering trade in the Yellow Sea in any way, to renounce Liao-Tung and to accept instead an indemnity of thirty million taels (fifty was the figure first suggested), and to evacuate all the occupied territories by the end of the year. On November 8th, the treaty with China confirming the retrocession of Liao-Tung was signed. The Japanese evacuated the occupied territories on the mainland in accordance with the terms of the treaty, and so ended the first war in Eastern Asia.

There still remains the question of how far these proceedings influenced the general political situation in Germany. We had encouraged Russia in her undertaking and had lent her our support in return for the vague prospect of a naval base in Asiatic waters. We were partly responsible for Russia being tied down for some time in Eastern Asia, but we had been powerless to weaken her alliance with France and we had made Japan our enemy and had completely deceived ourselves in the matter.[1]

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[1] Cp. Marschall's comprehensive memorandum of December 9th, 1895, which nevertheless does not elucidate clearly the real motives of German policy. It is not published in the *Grosse Politik*. Marschall there maintains that the traditional friendly relations with Japan had not suffered. "We

Count Hatzfeldt repeatedly warned us urgently that we ought not to bear the whole of Japan's hatred without some compensation from St. Petersburg. "Experience has shown," said he, "that Russia is glad of our help and profits by it, but expresses no gratitude unless we defer to her opinion in everything and comply unconditionally." He thoroughly disliked the whole oriental policy of Marschall and Holstein.[1] We had also widened the breach between ourselves and England, whose isolation we had hastened by our prompt and unconditional adherence to Russia's policy; indeed we had even contemplated hostile opposition if she encroached on Russia's sphere of influence. In the two remaining members of the Triple Alliance, who set great store on good relations with England, our friendliness to Russia had roused grave suspicions. We had concluded an Entente for Eastern Asia with Russia and France, and during the negotiations in the course of the summer we were obsessed by the constant danger of being outvoted by these two Powers. The idea we had sometimes cherished that this "temporary group" might perhaps come to have a permanent character soon proved itself an illusory dream. Already in October, Marschall declared that, as England's policy was not sufficiently definite to make co-operation with her practicable, we must at least maintain an absolutely free hand so as not to be dependent on the Dual Alliance. But worst of all, we had actually identified ourselves even more closely with Russian policy than the Kaiser or any of his advisers had really intended.

We had morally bound ourselves to support Russia in her oriental policy and fancied we were thereby prudently serving our own interests as well as the cause of the peace of the world. Our root idea was that if we stood well with Russia and kept

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believe, or rather we have reason to think, that the enlightened statesmen of that country do not disguise from themselves that Germany's participation in the unavoidable intervention was only beneficial to Japanese interests." How profoundly mistaken he was, is seen from the despatch of the German Ambassador at Tokio after his interview with Hayashi (in *Grosse Politik*, ix. 330). Marschall was otherwise greatly pleased with the success in the Far East. "However events develop in East Asia," he declares in the aforesaid memorandum, "no political changes can take place there without Germany having a leading voice."

[1] He wished us "to subordinate the remote possibility of territorial gains to the maintenance of the general peace," April 7th; *vide* also April 25th, May 2nd and June 18th (the last in *Grosse Politik*, ix. 353).

her tied down in Eastern Asia, we should not have to fear a war of revenge from France, nor Austria a revolt in the Balkans. The inflammable material was to be withdrawn from the two danger zones in Europe, Alsace and the Balkans, and piled up away in the Far East.

Of the premises on which this policy rested the first was that the Czar Nicholas II. would remain sole master of Russian policy and continue to guide it with logical consistency along the path it had chosen. Everything depended on his personal love of peace, his friendliness to Germany and his strong interest in the East Asiatic question ; that is on one individual whose limitations and feebleness of character were already well known. We had thereby bound ourselves to maintain the supremacy of his authority, in other words, the autocratic system in Russia ; for any diminution in the personal authority of the Czar might lead to a complete change of policy.

In the second place these premises rested on the presumption that Russia would ultimately be victorious in Eastern Asia. If her policy of expansion there collapsed, the repercussion would inevitably make itself felt in Europe, and in that case Russia would be sure to attribute to Germany the failure of a policy which had been inspired and abetted from Berlin, which again would further increase the enmity to Germany.

Finally we had barred out, or at least rendered much more difficult, the possibility of an understanding with England so urgently needed in many questions, assuming that we honestly adhered to the course now entered upon. We had staked everything on one card which was not even in our hand.

Whether this policy was due to the Kaiser personally or suggested to him by Holstein acting through Marschall, he identified himself personally with it and, from the summer of 1895, considered it his policy. The guiding lines then laid down were maintained until the Russian defeats in Eastern Asia in 1905 led to the collapse of the entire edifice. Hence the importance of the events in the spring of 1895, for then it was that Fate tied the knot of our destiny.

# IV. ENGLAND AND RUSSIA

GERMANY had acted jointly with Russia and France in Eastern Asia without achieving a permanent agreement ; and both there and in Africa a certain opposition to England had developed, though without leading to any active hostility. The German Empire still occupied a central position between the two groups of Powers, not bound to either, not wholly in sympathy with either, not in immediate danger of hostilities from either, and apparently with absolute commercial liberty. In July, 1895, when the Kaiser drafted the programme of his Eastern policy he remarked with satisfaction, "If England needs us, she will come of herself. We can then make our support conditional on concessions (Zanzibar, etc.). Germany on the whole is now in the fortunate position of being able to look on calmly and wait, for no one in Europe can achieve anything without our co-operation."

England was at this time completely isolated. The Liberal Ministry was severely criticised for the failure of its foreign policy, added to which there were internal disputes, and its position was constantly growing more insecure. Public opinion was dissatisfied with the eastern policy of the Government, which even to Rosebery's own partisans seemed too friendly to Turkey. The discontent deepened in the autumn of 1894 when tidings came of fresh Turkish atrocities against the Christian Armenians who were recalcitrant under the Turkish suzerainty. English Liberals had always shown more sympathy for the Christian nations of the Ottoman Empire than for the Turks, and now their feelings for the Armenians were especially strong. Added to this were humanitarian motives which in England always met with a response. Rosebery felt himself compelled to demand from the Porte far-reaching reforms ; but in this he received very indifferent support from the other Powers, none of whom wished to have the Eastern Question opened up. Rosebery himself was not altogether eager in the matter, but he was unwilling to risk a further reduction of his small following. By a naval demonstration off Beirout he ultimately compelled the Sultan to consent to the principal reforms, pending further discussion of details (June 14th, 1895).

But this temporary success was powerless to save the tottering Cabinet. After a defeat in Parliament, Rosebery resigned and Lord Salisbury, the Conservative leader, became Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary; Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary.

The new Government found the Armenian question a troublesome inheritance. The Conservatives on the whole regarded Turkey as a bulwark against Russia; they offered no energetic resistance to the Sultan's unscrupulous and evasive tactics, but they could not altogether ignore them, as the Liberals would then have kept up a constant agitation in religious and humanitarian circles in England.

Lord Salisbury had never personally been strongly in favour of maintaining Turkey intact. Since the last Oriental crisis from which she had emerged so enfeebled, he had been doubtful if it were worth England's while to bolster her up. As the Christians had again rebelled against the Turks in Macedonia he seriously doubted if the present situation in the Near East could be permanently maintained. It seemed to him as if Turkey at last were threatened with total dissolution. That he did not desire, for he realised to the full the difficulties that would arise over the question of partitioning the territory. On the other hand, he feared that unexpected events might happen and catch the Powers unprepared. Hence the desire, in view of such possibilities, to come to some kind of agreement now with the Powers which would prevent serious conflict. He made suggestions to this effect to Count Hatzfeldt, who advised his Government to be very wary and reserved; possibly compensations might be available now in the Far East; in any case we must keep plenty of elbow-room so long as no tangible advantages were offered us by any of the rival Powers.

Soon afterwards Salisbury returned to this idea when Hatzfeldt sought his support for the Italian expeditions in the Red Sea against Abyssinia and the kingdom of the Mahdi.

He said he considered the Italian adventure a failure ; he wished Italy well, but in some other place ; if there should be a dismemberment of Turkish territory, Tripoli and Albania might be reserved for Italy. He added further that he would have accepted the partitioning proposed by the Czar Nicholas I. in his time, *i.e.* Egypt for England, Salonica for Austria, Constantinople for Russia. In reply to Hatzfeldt's query he admitted that England could not view without anxiety Constantinople and the Dardanelles passing directly into Russia's control.

The Ambassador at once realised the significance of these remarks. If Lord Salisbury was in earnest about these plans, which involved a complete change of front in Britain's Eastern policy, there was a chance of the opportunity so long desired by Bismarck of carrying out a clear delimitation of the boundaries of the Austrian and Russian spheres of interest in the Balkans, and of removing the main cause of Russia's dissatisfaction with Germany. The value of the French alliance for Russia would be diminished and the whole situation altered. The smouldering fires in the two danger spots of Europe might then perhaps be stamped out. The question as to what the Balkan nations themselves would say to such plans was not touched upon.

In Berlin, however, they were full of anxiety. The Albanian question was fraught with danger for the Triple Alliance, for the mere dread of an Italian Albania might send Austria into the opposite camp. If Turkey broke up and the continental Powers came to blows over the disposal of the booty, it was probable that England would stand aside as a disinterested spectator in order to dictate finally the terms of peace. If, as was to be expected, France took part in this war and was defeated, Italy might then prefer to get Tunis and renounce any Balkan territory. Or would Salisbury require to have concessions in readiness for France also ? Even to suggest that at Vienna would be disturbing. It was therefore better to grant Italy advantages on the Red Sea and in North Africa than to open up such thorny questions. Germany's attitude should be one of extreme reserve so long as England's policy remained obscure. All the more so as there was the lack of a feeling of reciprocity about Salisbury's programme. The question naturally arose of what Germany was to receive ? In conversation with the

Imperial Chancellor, Holstein expressed his opinion that England wanted to see Turkey dismembered and hence would not let the Armenian question rest, but that Germany and Austria had no interest in hastening the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. This was certainly a misapprehension of Lord Salisbury's views.

As the Kaiser, accompanied by Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter as representative of the Foreign Office, was then on his way to England, it was thought wise to inform him of these views in case Lord Salisbury submitted his plans to him. They begged him to offer a firm resistance to Lord Salisbury and to compel him to drop his "incendiary" policy in the Balkans. Germany's interest required a thorough understanding with Austria and Italy as to the apportioning of territory before Turkey was dismembered. Strange to say they considered it was England's task to bring about this understanding "as it is not we who want to give Turkey the finishing stroke, but Lord Salisbury." By refusing to support Italy in Africa England evidently wished to goad her on in the Balkans so as to bring things to a head there.[1]

In this question again Herr von Holstein was the decisive personality. He received detailed information in private letters from Hatzfeldt and he drafted the statement that served as basis for the instructions and reports. His outstanding characteristic was distrust of England. In Salisbury's suggestions he saw nothing but the wish to stir up strife, separate us from Russia, break up the Triple Alliance, and cause disturbances everywhere, and let Britain meanwhile fish for herself in the troubled waters. England's readiness to allow France to take Morocco and Russia Constantinople was only explicable if, as a result, a general war came about by which England hoped to profit. Hatzfeldt repeatedly insisted that the English plan showed due consideration for both Austrian and Russian interests and that possibly it was thought that in getting Morocco, France too would be completely satisfied. On the other hand, to refuse all discussion would only lead to our losing our influence with England in further decisions. He pointed out how important it was to rid the world of so much inflammable material and begged for authority to initiate definite discussions, and eventually to bring forward actual counter-proposals. He did not believe that England wanted a great war or that she could gain much without taking part in it herself, and he cautioned us against relying on Russia, who was no well-wisher of ours, and was by treaty bound to France.

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[1] Telegram from Holstein to Kiderlen-Wächter, August 3rd (*Grosse Politik*, 10. 19).

Although in Berlin they were well aware that if Russia were thoroughly satisfied, things would assume quite a different aspect, the Ambassador was only allowed to discuss matters privately with Salisbury and was refused permission to bring forward proposals of his own. They were afraid of indiscretions at St. Petersburg. Germany must keep a free hand so as to be able " at the psychological moment to demand something for ourselves, even though not in the Mediterranean. Political services of the 'corvée' type are to be avoided." What Germany was to ask was not definitely mentioned, but, as we know, they were hoping for coaling stations in Eastern Asia, Zanzibar and Samoa.

All that Hatzfeldt achieved was permission to beg the Kaiser to be very reserved towards Lord Salisbury, so as to give the impression that in such a weighty matter they must consult their Allies, and that there was no question of any immediate crisis.

As a matter of fact, after the dinner at Cowes on August 5th Lord Salisbury mentioned his plan to the Kaiser, who replied that he considered it still possible by means of adequate reforms to maintain Turkey. He went considerably further in this strain than Hatzfeldt had wished. He was evidently still under the impression produced by the information in previous despatches from Berlin, which gave a wrong idea of the project. Indeed he had remarked to Kiderlen on receiving them that they were typically English plans, and he would avoid committing himself.

A second interview, planned for the following day on board the *Hohenzollern*, fell through, as at the time fixed Lord Salisbury was summoned to an audience by Queen Victoria, in consequence of which he had to return to London immediately. The tales about Lord Salisbury having been rudely treated by the Kaiser because he was late in arriving are totally without foundation and are evidently based on gossip current in London at the time.

Lord Salisbury later on occasionally reverted to his proposal, but as he met with no response he became gradually more reserved. The Armenian problem was again growing acute, for there had been a massacre in Constantinople and hideous atrocities in Trebizond and other parts of Asia Minor. Owing to Russia's refusal, the proposed naval demonstration against Turkey by the united fleets of the Great Powers was abandoned. Austria and Italy, relying on England's active support, prepared a naval demonstration against Turkey, but the English Cabinet, against Salisbury's wish, refused at the last moment to co-operate and so nothing came of it. Fortunately, however, the Porte gave way, consented to the reforms demanded, and took steps to carry them through. The immediate danger of a break up of Turkey was thus averted, and Lord Salisbury expressly said he had now quite abandoned the idea of partitioning her territory. He also spoke somewhat more sceptically as to the possibility of handing over the Straits to Russia.

It is doubtful if any understanding satisfactory to all the parties concerned could have been reached as to the delimitation of the spheres of influence in the East and on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, and even more doubtful if any formula could have been devised that would have really averted the danger of conflict. But the attempt would have been worth the trouble because of the great relief it would have afforded in the event of success, and because even in the event of failure it would have brought the various claims into the light. Germany would not consider it, partly from fear lest negotiations of this kind might lead to discord and conflicts, for the solution of which she thought she could not count on England's active support; partly, too, because she could see no prospect of advantage to herself commensurate with the great risk incurred. The mere mooting of these questions was considered a threat to her own system of treaties, as Austria's antipathy to any increase of Russia's power was well known in Berlin.

On more than one occasion the Emperor Francis Joseph declared emphatically that he would not tolerate any aggression by Russia either with regard to Bulgaria or Constantinople. The Kaiser considered this most unwise. "The Dardanelles," he declared, "Russia can pounce upon any day she likes, unhindered.

He ought to be thinking of suitable compensations." He had in view, in saying this, free access to Salonica and the reduction of troops on Russia's western frontier. If Russia's plans were opposed in Vienna, there was the danger that Russia might unite with England and receive from her alone a present of the Dardanelles.[1] In Berlin they were clear that Austrian activity either in Bulgaria or the Straits would involve aggressive action not covered by the terms of the Triple Alliance, which they could not undertake to support without further consideration. They felt that Austria, by her unwise conduct, had weakened her previous influence in Bulgaria. Besides that, they rightly feared that the more Russia felt her power challenged in Bulgaria, the more zealously would she seek to win over Serbia, thereby creating serious embarrassment for Austria. Knowing, therefore, the prevailing mood in Vienna, it was thought wise to maintain the existing state of affairs as far as possible and so avoid opening up these vexatious questions.

On this last point the political leaders in Vienna were in complete agreement with Germany. Count Goluchowski had serious doubts as to whether Austria could undertake any extension of territory in the Balkans without breaking up the fabric of the State. He declared that the Slavs within the Monarchy, with the exception of the Poles, wanted to be rid of German and Magyar predominance in their home affairs, and in foreign affairs to renounce all active intervention in the East; they also desired the evacuation of Bosnia and Dalmatia and the closest association with Russia; and then there would be an end of the Triple Alliance. Hence an Eastern policy running counter to Russia's interests was to Germany's benefit. All this tended to produce a feeling of utter perplexity. Austria did not want anything for herself, but at all costs she wished to prevent Russia from extending her influence. That was a vital matter for her and a point of honour, said Goluchowski. Austrian policy regarded the barren programme of maintaining the *status quo* at any price as the last word in wisdom. Another Austrian statesman remarked significantly, "A State composed of various nationalities cannot make war without injuring itself. Victory or defeat present almost equal difficulties to a conglomerate of nations."[1]

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[1] Eulenburg, August 8th and 18th, with marginal comments by the Kaiser. Despatch to Eulenburg, August 19th (*Grosse Politik*, x. 32, 139, 141).

Marschall, acting in agreement with the Kaiser, considered it necessary to renew the warning that any support outside the scope of the Alliance would require special consideration; if they needed our assistance then they must consult us. If Russia occupied Constantinople, and England calmly allowed her to do so, we should urgently dissuade Austria from waging war on England's behalf. "Should Austria-Hungary, in spite of this, actually intervene, she will do so entirely at her own risk." What we had to remember first of all was that our intervention would immediately bring France on the scene. Germany would certainly support Austria if the latter's position or existence were threatened. "But it would then rest solely with us to decide on the time and the manner of our intervention." Meanwhile there was the danger lest any harsh words should cause a feeling in Vienna that we should leave Austria in the lurch. As we had no other guaranteed alliance it was thought unwise to take risks and so the word was passed, "We must neither rob Austria of her hopes, nor commit ourselves to a definite line of action." The Kaiser remarked to the Austrian Ambassador that if any unprovoked threat were offered to the position of the Danube Monarchy as a Great Power, the Emperor Francis Joseph might rely on him. This remark may have had a soothing effect coming after the admonitions conveyed by Eulenburg,[2] but it was too dubious to be a real definition of our attitude towards Austria's Eastern policy.

Italy as well as Austria had been disappointed by our break with England. The Italians were fighting in Africa to maintain their sovereignty over Abyssinia. They were eagerly hoping for help from England, and considered that it was due to the bad relations between England and Germany that Salisbury had held so coldly aloof from Germany's ally in this matter. In Berlin the German statesmen would willingly have helped their ally, but they could not play an active part in those remote regions, and they considered that the friendly relations previously existing between England and the Triple Alliance required England to do something. They took it very much amiss that Lord Salisbury showed no desire to do so, and grew more embittered against England's purely selfish policy. This feeling was deepened by certain differences with London over South African questions.

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[1] Eulenburg, November 10th (*Grosse Politik*, x. 162).

[2] Marschall to Hohenlohe, November 15th; Szögenyi to Marschall, November 17th (*Grosse Politik*, x. 204).

For a long time past Germany had been on friendly terms with the Boer republic. According to the English interpretation of the Treaty of Pretoria of 1884, the justice of which had been challenged by the Boers, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State were vassal States of England and as such were not allowed independent political intercourse with foreign Powers. Although they had absolute freedom in their internal administration, in other matters they were already part of Britain's world-wide empire. The fact that Germany had interested herself so keenly in the construction of the railway from Pretoria to Lorenço Marques had been resented in London. President Kruger's speech at the dinner on the Kaiser's birthday, on January 27th, refers to an official protest in Berlin that Germany was fomenting a spirit of resistance in the country, to which the Imperial Government replied that the commercial treaty which guaranteed their economic interests justified them in intervening to vindicate the independence of the Transvaal in all its former extent as assured by the treaty of 1884.[1] In July, 1895, at the festivities in connection with the completion of the railway to Lorenço Marques, two German warships put in an appearance, and the Kaiser sent a telegram congratulating President Kruger on the successful conclusion of this piece of work, so unpalatable to the English.

In October, when Sir Edward Malet, the English Ambassador in Berlin, was recalled, he took the opportunity, when paying his farewell calls, of giving expression to this feeling rather more drastically than was desired in London. He again complained to Herr von Marschall that Germany was encouraging the Boers in their obstinacy and that the Boers were relying on Germany's protection ; and now they had imposed intolerable tariffs on the trade of Cape Colony. A continuation of this policy might lead to serious developments. Marschall replied that we only wanted to protect existing conditions and our own economic interests. To the incorporation of the Boer States in Rhodesia we could not consent without provoking a storm of indignation in Germany. It was for England to consider whether she had so many friends in the world that she could lightly break with Germany. England, replied Malet, possessed the means of satisfying and tranquillising many of her enemies. Said Marschall, " Yes, if she is willing to sacrifice the Dardanelles, Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus, but that is rather a high price to pay ; it would be better to allow Germany some small colonial advantages." [1]

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[1] Cf. the extracts from the English Blue Book in *Staatsarchiv*, vol. lviii., and *Grosse Politik*, xi. 3 f.

As a result of this conversation, the Kaiser remonstrated sharply with Colonel Swaine, English Military Attaché in Berlin. He declared that Malet had actually used the word " war." For the sake of a few square miles of niggers and palm-trees England had actually threatened her only real friend, a grandson of Her Majesty the Queen, with war ! Language of that kind compelled him to make common cause with Russia and France. The greater part of his labour for years past to bring Germany and England closer to one another for the working out of their common tasks in the cause of progress had been destroyed. England must finally decide either to join the Triple Alliance by pledging herself in a definite treaty, or else to support his enemies.[2]

Lord Salisbury at once disavowed the language of the retiring Ambassador and declared that there was no intention of making any alteration in the legal status of South Africa. The other remarks of the Kaiser he passed over in silence. The Kaiser gathered the impression that England had intended to confront him with the Transvaal question as a sort of ultimatum, and insisted that we must increase our navy so that in the event of a conflict we should not find ourselves defenceless.

When at the beginning of December the Italians suffered a sharp reverse in Abyssinia and again looked to England for help, the Kaiser once more asked Colonel Swaine if England would not be willing to join the Triple Alliance by treaty and undertake definite engagements ; otherwise, as her policy had hitherto provoked universal distrust, it might easily happen that she would find herself opposed by a solid block of Powers on the Continent.[1] Again the proposal received no reply in London.

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[1] Marschall's report, October 15th, 1895 (*Grosse Politik*, xi. 5).

[2] Dictated by the Kaiser, October 25th, 1895 (*Grosse Politik*, xi. 8).

Herr von Marschall was not dissatisfied. He felt we might otherwise have been called upon to help in the defence of Britain's world-wide empire, especially to defend India against Russia. Holstein advised that we should first of all make the English feel that we could do without them. We had already co-operated with Russia in the Far East and similar possibilities might again present themselves. He suggested that it might be possible to conclude a general agreement with the Dual Alliance if the Congo were ceded to France and Korea to Russia, in return for which we might ask for the recognition of Italy's suzerainty in Abyssinia, a coaling-station and commercial privileges in the Far East for Germany, and for Austria assurances guaranteeing the maintenance of the present *status quo* in the Balkans. India, Egypt and Persia were not to be brought into the agreement, "for so long as England retains these, she will ultimately have to approach the Triple Alliance again if she is not prepared to yield without drawing the sword. She will only properly appreciate this necessity if she learns by experience—as the present proposal aims to make her—that the Triple Alliance will not under all conceivable circumstances follow the colours." [2]

Following up this line of thought Marschall remarked, on December 31st, to the English Ambassador that in England too much importance was attached to the differences among the continental groups. The tension between France and Germany had almost disappeared. Without wishing to use threats he must point out "that the idea of settling the various questions still agitating these groups of States, regardless of English interests, and even using English interests as a means of compensation," was not impossible.

Just at this moment when Germany was considering how to show England that she needed us and in certain circumstances might even find us unpleasant opponents, word came from

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[1] The Kaiser's notes, December 20th, 1895, communicated to the Embassies (*Grosse Politik*, x. 251).

[2] Holstein, memorandum, December 30th, 1895 (*Grosse Politik*, xi. 69).

South Africa of the sudden rising which Dr. Jameson, supported by the discontented elements in Johannesburg, had set on foot in Cape Colony against the Transvaal State. Marschall at once sent word to London warning the English Government that they had promised to maintain the *status quo*. When the news came that the raid had actually taken place, Hatzfeldt received orders to enquire if the Government justified this breach of peace. "In the event of your Excellency receiving the impression that this outrage on the rights of nations is authorised, your Excellency will demand your passports." If this was not the case, he was to request information as to what measures were contemplated to deal with it. The consulate at Pretoria was empowered to commandeer the crew of the *Seeadler* then lying at Lorenço Marques, if necessary, for the protection of German subjects; and a request was sent to Portugal for permission to allow a small detachment to march through her territory.

At the same time instructions were sent to Count Münster in Paris to find out whether France would be prepared to co-operate with Germany in colonial matters in view of the continuous expansion of the British Empire. The other Powers could not remain tranquil spectators if England were gradually to confiscate everything that was not yet under European suzerainty. The Transvaal question was to be used, without rousing suspicion, to produce the impression that Germany wanted the support of the other Powers only for this present emergency. The plan of a "continental" understanding with several well-defined objects in view was what was really in our minds. This plan was described to the Ambassador just as Holstein had given it in his memorandum, and the aim of the proceeding was expressly defined as to make England realise the danger of her isolation and the necessity of joining the Triple Alliance. Marschall spoke in a similar fashion to the French Ambassador Herbette, of course without mentioning his ultimate aims.[1]

The English Government immediately assured Count Hatzfeldt that they had no hand in Jameson's plans, and were doing everything possible to restore order and would demand Jameson's immediate recall. Lord Salisbury gave stringent orders to avoid saying anything that might sound like a threat. But when the news came that an armed encounter had already taken place on Transvaal territory, Marschall sent a note to be delivered in London, lodging a formal protest. Germany was not minded to accept " any alteration whatsoever of the legal status of the South African Republic as guaranteed by treaties." He refused to trust to English assurances, and declared all confidence had been destroyed by the fact that England was evidently willing to reap the fruits of Rhodes's policy.[1]

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[1] Instructions to Count Münster, January 1st, 1896 (*Grosse Politik*, xi. 69). *Rapport de la Commission d'enquête*, etc., 264 ff.

Just then news came in that the Boers had defeated the Jameson Raiders at Krugersdorp and taken them prisoner. Marschall at once wired to Hatzfeldt not to deliver the note. It was, however, already in the Foreign Office; but as Lord Salisbury was away it was handed back the same night, unopened. The whole incident must have made a curious impression in London.

On January 3rd the Kaiser sent his famous telegram to President Kruger congratulating him on his success in conquering the disturbers of the peace by his own efforts, and in defending the independence of his country against attacks from outside without appealing for the help of friendly Powers. The sending of this telegram was decided upon at a meeting at which, besides the Kaiser himself, there were present the Imperial Chancellor, Marschall, Kayser, the Colonial Minister, and the representative of the Navy.[2] The Kaiser began by advocating far-reaching measures, such as a German protectorate in the Transvaal and the despatch of troops. The Imperial Chancellor declared such steps would infallibly lead to war with England. Then followed general perplexity, for the Kaiser wanted something done, whereas Salisbury's correct attitude had removed any reasonable pretext for further intervention by Germany. During an interval the Colonial Minister suggested to the Imperial Chancellor the sending of a telegram of congratulation to Kruger as a sort of lightning-conductor for the Kaiser's energy. Marschall accepted this solution and immediately drew up a draft, which was submitted on the meeting being resumed. Whether or not Holstein's advice was sought in the interval is not known. In the course of discussion the text was made somewhat more stringent, and the words "preserving the respect for your government," altered to "preserving the independence of the country against attacks from outside," a marked thrust at the English claim to sovereignty.[1]

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[1] Marschall, January 2nd (*Grosse Politik*, xi. 26).

[2] Cp. F. Thimme, " Die Krügerdepesche " in *Europäische Gespräche*, 201 (1924).

Although the Kruger telegram did not therefore originate in a sudden impulse of the Kaiser's, but was suggested by the Secretary of State and drafted after full discussion in collaboration with the responsible authorities, nevertheless the Kaiser was really the author of it. His insistence on measures in favour of the Boers, behind which was the desire to gain a German base in South Africa, induced his advisers to propose this seemingly harmless outlet as an escape from worse dangers.

Nothing has so inflamed public opinion in England against the Kaiser and German policy as the Krüger telegram. Long years afterwards German statesmen were reproached for it as an unfriendly act. It was considered an unwarrantable interference in the internal affairs of the British Empire.

Germany had also been agitating to get the Boers to propose a conference for the legal definition of the neutrality of the Republics. President Kruger, however, wanted the actual repeal of the earlier treaty with England and the dissolution of the Chartered Company in whose service Jameson had been; he also asked what Germany, France and Holland thought of doing in the event of war with England. Marschall deprecated such extreme demands, but referred repeatedly to the possibility of a conference. After the English Government had refused Kruger's request for the repeal of the Treaty of 1884, the latter actually sought to bring about a conference as suggested. But he found little support, as Lord Salisbury expressed his willingness to uphold the *status quo* without raising the question of sovereignty, to give financial compensation for the losses during the raid, and to curtail the independent power of the Chartered Company in policy and the conduct of war. Marschall advised the Boer leader to rest satisfied, which he did.[2]

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[1] The correction of these words was due to Marschall. The telegram was sent off on January 3rd, at 11.30 a.m.

[2] Marschall's account of the conversation with Dr. Leyds on January 11th (*Grosse Politik*, xi. 49 and 51).

During these critical days the Kaiser had emphatically assured the Czar that he would never consent to any oppression of the Boer State. To Dr. Leyds, the Boer representative, he stated with equal explicitness that he would not allow any occupation of Lorenço Marques by the English. If this seaport were not to remain Portuguese it must be either in the hands of the Germans or the Boers. He even wanted to have the harbour occupied by the German cruiser then lying there, the moment there was any tangible sign of such intention on England's part, and was only restrained by the urgent remonstrances of the Imperial Chancellor. On Hohenlohe's memorandum he remarked, "Am of a different opinion, but give way," and at the end he added, "The loss of or failure to obtain Delagoa will be difficult to make good and be bitterly regretted by us some day."[1] These remarks show plainly that the Kaiser greatly underestimated the danger, on which Hohenlohe laid stress, of England and France immediately opposing any such aggression from Germany. What a lack of political tact is revealed by these remarks to the Czar and Dr. Leyds, whereby moral obligations of far-reaching scope for the future were undertaken without any serious necessity!

In counselling moderation to the Boers, the German Government were certainly influenced by their disappointment at the result of their attempt in Paris to organise a continental bloc against England. It had been hoped to induce Italy also to approach the Dual Alliance, and it was thought very desirable that England should be warned from that quarter. But the Roman Government were to be left in no doubt "that we feel ourselves master of the situation," although we would also take Italy's interests into consideration as much as possible. An understanding between the English and France and Russia was judged to be out of the question, as too costly. An overture had also been made to St. Petersburg and had received the courteous but inconclusive answer that Germany in the Transvaal was representing European interests. In Paris not only was the German suggestion dropped entirely; word was sent of it immediately to London. The French Ambassador, Baron de Courcel, was said to have remarked to Lord Salisbury at the time,

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[1] The Kaiser to the Imperial Chancellor, January 6th (*Grosse Politik*, xi. 36).

"France has only one enemy and that is Germany. You can direct your policy accordingly."[1] Whether these were the words actually used or not we cannot say. In any case they recorded faithfully the spirit of the French press, whose guiding idea was "No unnatural alliances."

Herr von Marschall concluded this was a warning not to trust to France. Unfortunately, too, the idea of a temporary co-operation of the Continental Powers to facilitate a favourable settlement of the questions still in dispute with England without recourse to war proved impracticable. So England could go on doing as she liked undisturbed. "We may lament this state of affairs, but we cannot alter it at present." A prudent defensive was all that was left for Germany, and that might have been known beforehand.[2] The Imperial Chancellor declared it had again been proved that France subordinated all questions to the idea of revenge, and concluded, therefore, that co-operation with France, even in matters outside Europe, could not be reckoned on in future. Holstein, however, was or pretended to be satisfied on the whole with the turn of events. He had evidently been deeply interested in the idea of joining with Russia and France in opposing England, although doubtful whether it would be altogether beneficial for Germany if Britain's powerful position were destroyed. "Let us be glad," he wrote to Hatzfeldt, "if the matter ends as it promises to do, with a small diplomatic success for Germany and a small political reverse for England."[3]

As soon as Hatzfeldt found that they had been somewhat disillusioned in Berlin, he urgently warned them, now that they had shown their teeth, to go back to the policy of absolute neutrality. England must not be forced into the arms of France. It was not at all to our interest to see England's power diminished so long as the Dual Alliance existed. It might be desirable to get Austria to show some compliance to Russia in the East and so facilitate the restoration of the old league of the Three Emperors. As a matter of fact, England did approach France at this juncture, and Berlin learnt with grief and anger that she was ready to admit France to a species of co-regency with her in Egypt. Holstein grimly remarked it would be "the most portentous folly in English history," and would compel Germany to strive seriously to effect a close connection with the Dual Alliance.

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[1] The words were quoted in a later note of Holstein's on February 26th, 1906, who may have got them from an unreliable source.

[2] Memorandum to Radolin, January 19th (*Grosse Politik*, xi. 82).

[3] Holstein to Hatzfeldt, January 10th (*Grosse Politik*, xi. 48).

The Kruger episode had passed without serious consequences. The English Government, then involved in a sharp dispute with the United States with regard to Venezuela, were anxious to avoid a conflict and treated the matter as of little importance. But it was viewed otherwise in public opinion, which has always exercised great influence in England. Germany's policy in the previous year had been severely criticised, even while the Kaiser was the guest of his grandmother. Now the Kruger telegram was regarded as an attack on England's rights, as a hostile act. Chamberlain upheld this view when he announced publicly that England would oppose any interference by foreign Powers in our South African affairs, regardless of danger and without consideration of the cost. The Kaiser himself, in writing to his grandmother, disclaimed any hostile intention; he had, he declared, been actuated by scorn that a rabble should have dared to act against the peaceful intentions and commands of the most gracious Queen,[1] but this letter made little impression.

The German Government in their attitude at this time were only to a limited extent influenced by the desire to protect our economic interests in South Africa. According to Hatzfeldt's calculation there were 15,000 Germans in Johannesburg and about 500 million marks of German capital invested there. They might at least have waited till they knew whether these interests would be injured. The impelling motive was not sympathy for small states—and their legal status, moreover, was highly doubtful—whose rights had been infringed by a powerful aggressor. The feeling of kinship with the Boers was very slight, and would certainly not have evoked of itself such far-reaching decisions from the Government. Germany did not wish the Boer States to be linked up with Cape Colony and Rhodesia in a large South African empire, which presumably would then strive to circumvent German South-West Africa, whose existence from the very outset had been extremely irksome to the Government of Cape Colony. And not even all this, but the wish to give England a lesson and a warning was the deciding factor. They wanted to make her feel that Germany was not prepared to allow any further extension of the British Empire in Africa without equivalent compensations, and that it was to England's own interest to stand well with the Triple Alliance.

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[1] The Kaiser to Queen Victoria, January 8th.

That it was a very ill-considered policy no one will dispute nowadays. What means had we to help the Boers if England had decided for Jameson, or for other reasons had thought fit to set aside the semi-independence of the Boer States? We could not have sent a single company across the ocean against England's wish. No one in Berlin ever thought of actually going to war with England. They thought in Berlin they could intervene with some acerbity because they fancied English policy was feeble and averse from war, and they counted without sufficient reason on willing co-operation from France and Russia.

We are forced to look upon it as a result of the increasing tension between Germany and England that in 1896, after hesitating for months, Lord Salisbury refused the desire of Austria and Italy for a formal renewal of the Mediterranean agreement of 1887. In Vienna it was said that any further rapprochement between Austria-Hungary and Russia, such as Germany advocated, would break up the Triple Alliance, since it was of no interest to Austria whether or not Alsace-Lorraine became French. Germany coolly replied that she would offer no opposition if Austria wished to try whether she could obtain an alliance with England by giving up the Triple Alliance. The Imperial Chancellor at that time stated the main object of our policy as follows: "We stand firm by the Triple Alliance, but we shall not allow it to be used for vague plans of Austria's in the East. Austria must rest content with the defensive character of the Triple Alliance if she wishes to escape ruin." He declined Goluchowski's suggestion for a conference of the Chiefs of the General Staffs and for a discussion of the circumstances in which the terms of the treaty became operative, for he did not wish to be drawn into a warlike policy. In Vienna they knew perfectly well that they could not do without the Triple Alliance, and they waited on, grumbling and hoping for an improvement in the relations between Germany and England.

In Italy, too, they were very uneasy over the bad feeling between London and Berlin. They were now doubtful if any of the parties to the Triple Alliance could count on English help and yet they could not do without it. Just then (March 1st, 1896) the severe defeat of the Italians at Adowa by Menelik of Abyssinia brought home to them afresh the value of English support for the Triple Alliance. The Kaiser himself outlined to the British Ambassador an appalling picture of the dangers now threatening; France was supporting Menelik; after the expulsion of the Italians Russia meant to seize Massowa in order to block the Suez Canal and the sea route to India; France was to receive the Canary Isles and so be able to control the ocean route via the Cape of Good Hope to India; England was therefore in serious danger. Austria, whose Slav territory Russia wished to annex, was also in parlous plight; so England ought to help Italy and join the Triple Alliance after all.[1]

Lord Salisbury, who of course knew that Germany had just then been coquetting with the idea of a continental *bloc* against England, and possibly thought it might succeed, answered coldly and courteously that he was ready to work with the Triple Alliance, but could give no promise that would bind England to take part in war; that had always been his policy, and the Kaiser would at one time have been thoroughly satisfied with it, but evidently not now. Since the Kaiser's remarks to Colonel Swaine and the Kruger telegram, he was no longer surprised at anything; but he could not account for this sudden change of mind.[2]

England took advantage of present circumstances to carry out her long meditated campaign for the conquest of the Soudan. An expeditionary army advanced on Dongola on the pretext of relieving the Italians shut up in Kassala and England claimed from the Triple Alliance Powers a share of the accumulated funds of the international financial administration of Egypt for this expedition. Russia and France lodged a protest against this, for France herself was planning an expedition from the Congo to the Upper Nile Valley and did not wish to facilitate matters for the English. The International Tribunal in Egypt upheld the protest and the money advanced had to be refunded.

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[1] Marschall's description of a conversation of the Kaiser with Lascelles, March 4th. Despatch to Hatzfeldt, March 4th (*Grosse Politik*, xi. 235-236).

[2] Marschall's note on his conversation with Lascelles, on March 13th (*Grosse Politik*, xi. 242).

Almost at the same time Herr von Marschall sought once more to induce the French to join in common action against any further extension of England's power in Africa, outside the limits of Egypt and the Soudan. He also refused Italy's request to have it expressly stated on the renewal of the Triple Alliance that she was not pledged to fight against England, remarking that this would make the alliance, which was an agreement for defensive purposes, look as if it were aimed at the Dual Alliance, which would never do. Meanwhile by England it was regarded as an unfriendly act that the Zanzibar Pretender, who had not been recognised by England, had taken refuge in the German consulate and had reached the mainland on a German cruiser.

It is only too easy to see how such a policy could not inspire confidence anywhere. Foreign representatives in Berlin, who ascribed this erratic procedure mainly to the Kaiser's initiative, asked themselves whether any deep-laid plans lurked behind these sudden actions or whether they were the outcome of the monarch's nervous irritability; they mostly inclined to the latter view.

There was little change in the position of affairs during the following months; the growing tension between England and the Triple Alliance dominated the situation. After England had agreed to the complete control of Madagascar by France, and had, with some difficulty, come to an understanding with her as to Siam, and with Russia as to the Afghan boundary, the chief points of dispute remaining were the future of the Upper Valley of the Nile, Russia's penetration of Northern China and her increasing influence in Korea, and the Turkish questions. The darkest cloud on the horizon at present was the Balkan problem. There was no prospect of peace in Turkey; the unrest in Armenia persisted; Crete, backed by Greek support, was in revolt against the Sultan's rule; Macedonia was seething with discontent. Here the clash of the Great Powers seemed most likely. True to Bismarckian tradition, Germany bestirred herself to ward it off. She advocated the view at Vienna that we should look on calmly at the developments in the Balkan Peninsula, even if it came to the Balkan people fighting among themselves. We could actually afford to let Russia reach the Mediterranean, as this would be very irksome to France owing to her interests in Syria and might perhaps impair the Dual Alliance; and in any case it would bring England upon the scene. It was only if England were seriously engaged or offered binding pledges that the Powers of the Triple Alliance need bestir themselves. England, Holstein believed, would only prove amenable when she saw that Germany did not mean to defend the Straits.

Count Goluchowski shared these opinions on the whole so far as concerned the expansion of individual Balkan States, which was a matter of indifference to him. But if Russia invaded Roumania in order to march on Constantinople, that would be a signal to Austria to begin hostilities. He did not favour the German proposal to allow Russia to come to Constantinople unopposed. Austrian statesmen believed a delimitation of the various spheres of influence in the Balkans to be of no value, because Russia would ignore them in the event of war. The Kaiser, however, thought otherwise, and favoured the idea of at least making an effort in that direction.

A settlement of the Cretan difficulty was ultimately reached by granting the island autonomy with its own constitution and administration under Turkish sovereignty. The Macedonian question might have produced greater complications had it then been to Russia's interest to have Turkey further enfeebled. But this was not the case. They knew at St. Petersburg about the plans for dismemberment which England had had under consideration for some time, but they were not altogether sure how far these would be advantageous to Russia. It remained to be seen if Russia would be allowed full control over the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles or only over the northern of these two Straits, as Lord Salisbury had once indicated; or perhaps only over the European shore. There was the question, too, whether the upkeep of these distant outposts were possible without a powerful fleet (which they did not possess) in the Black Sea. It seemed better to retain and if need be to strengthen Turkey's sovereignty, which for the present seemed the least dangerous course.

In the summer of 1896 the Kaiser agitated for an understanding between Russia and England on the Mediterranean question on the basis that all fortresses were to be dismantled and free passage granted to warships of all nationalities without alteration of the territorial status. Lord Salisbury approved of this, but drew attention to the fact that Austria would not give her consent, which the Kaiser had to admit.[1] The President of the Russian Ministry was also sounded; he thought the right plan would be to open the Straits in time of peace to all warships, but to shut them in war. Underlying this was Russia's fear of the appearance of an English fleet in the Black Sea if the Straits were thrown open unconditionally. It became increasingly evident that the solution Russia desired was that they should be open to her and barred against all other Powers. Prince Lobanov considered it much more urgent and important to turn the English out of Egypt, or at least to deprive them of the control of the Suez Canal; for here Russia and Germany had interests in common and ought to defend them together against England.[2]

These questions were troublesome, but not immediately dangerous. In the autumn the Czar went on a long European journey, and on September 5th he met the Kaiser in Silesia, when a complete agreement was reached by the two Governments on Eastern questions. The maintenance of the *status quo* and of the authority of the Sultan, who was to be compelled to fulfil at once his promise of reforms, were the leading features of this agreement. In his private conversations with the Czar, the Kaiser again sought to win him over to the idea of a great continental league. Europe must combine not only against the yellow races but also against the United States and its economic hostility announced in the Mackinley Tariff. He was ready at any time to unite with the French for the defence of Europe. If England would not co-operate, the Continent must act alone. The Czar promised to advocate these views on his forthcoming visit to Paris. He was there in October, but it is highly doubtful if he did so. On his return journey from France he again met the Kaiser—at Wiesbaden on October 28th—and on his departure he remarked, "I am not worrying in the least about Constantinople. My eyes and my whole interest are fixed on China." [1] Although this might have been said to fit in with the Kaiser's wishes, with which he had made the Czar sufficiently familiar, nevertheless it was in line with the policy followed at that time by Russia, as laid down by Prince Lobanov and continued after his death in August, 1896, by Schischkin, and later on, by Count Muravieff.

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[1] Dictated by the Kaiser after his conversation with Lascelles, August 27th, 1896. Marschall's notes of August 29th and 31st (*Grosse Politik*, xii. 52-56).

[2] Eulenburg's report of his interview with Prince Lobanov in Vienna, August 28th (*Grosse Politik*, xii. 52-56).

A result of this policy of detachment in the Balkans was that the Czar made friends with Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, whom he had previously refused to recognise, and invited him to St. Petersburg. In Berlin these proceedings were watched with complacency. Holstein considered that, as Russia was now holding aloof in the Balkans, Austria would have time to strengthen her influence once more in those states whose allegiance to her had been weakened by her own fault, especially if the Czar tried to exercise his newly won supremacy in Bulgaria somewhat too harshly. Russia was pursuing this policy when in the spring of 1897 a new revolt broke out in Crete, the goal of which was union with Greece. The Greek Government sided with the Cretans, and in April they began hostilities in Thessaly against the Turks with disastrous results, losing some frontier territory and having to pay a war indemnity and to renounce all interference in Crete. Meanwhile revolts had also broken out in Macedonia and Albania. Every moment it seemed as if the long-feared collapse of Turkey was about to begin.

It was only with difficulty that the Great Powers succeeded in localising the Greco-Turkish War and preventing the opening up of larger questions. As Austria was not seeking any extension of territory, and Russia, for the reasons already stated, desired the maintenance of the *status quo* in Turkey, the two parties reached an agreement without undue difficulty. Germany acted as intermediary. The Russian Ambassador in Vienna, Count Kapnist, declared that Russia had put aside all thoughts of conquest and had no interest in territorial changes in the Balkan States, provided Constantinople and the surrounding district remained untouched. Russia, said he, required this doorkeeper in Turkish costume at the Dardanelles, which must not be thrown open under any circumstances. The Black Sea must remain a Russian *mare clausum*; but for Russia to go down to the Mediterranean would be a gross blunder. His view was that Bulgaria might extend to the Aegean Sea, Serbia to the Adriatic, Greece receive Salonica, and Roumania, Varna. Here we have the identical plan for partitioning the territory that cropped up again in 1912, though at this time it was only to be a final resort in case the *status quo* could not be maintained.

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[1] The Kaiser's note, November 12th, 1896 (*Grosse Politik*, xii. 221).

A formal agreement was signed when the Emperor Francis Joseph, accompanied by Count Goluchowski, came in person to St. Petersburg. Both Powers bound themselves to uphold the existing situation as long as possible, but if this proved impossible they were neither to seek conquests for themselves nor to permit the other Powers to do so. As regards Constantinople and the Straits, Austria declined to make any definite declaration, as this was a European question; while Russia pronounced herself satisfied if the conditions of the existing treaties were maintained. Some difficulties arose over future possibilities in the event of the dismemberment of Turkey. Austria wished to have her right confirmed to the complete annexation of Bosnia, Herzegovina and Novibazar. Russia reserved this matter for consideration later and called attention to the ill-defined frontiers of the Sanjak. Austria further wished to have it arranged that Albania, from Lake Skutari to Janina, should form an independent State, and that none of the Balkan States should be so increased that it had a preponderance over the others. Russia postponed these details for future negotiation, but promised to take no decisive step without previous consultation. The vital fact was that Turkey was to be left unimpaired as long as possible; but they were not altogether unanimous as to what was to be done with the various territories if the dissolution took place, beyond a suggestion for some future agreement exclusive of their own territorial acquisitions.

In consequence of this understanding, Russia and Austria acted jointly with their allies, France, Germany, and Italy, during the critical periods of this year. They co-operated in the blockade of Greece, in localising the Greek War, in making Greece, after her defeat, accept the onerous Turkish conditions, and in instituting an international control of Greek finances so that Greece actually paid both her old and her new debts. Germany was specially zealous in upholding Turkey: she even proposed a blockade of all the Greek ports so as to make any support of the Cretan rebellion impossible; but this England unhesitatingly refused.

England, indeed, was following a policy widely different from that of the other Powers. She sided with Crete and the Greeks, just as she had formerly sided with the Armenians, against the interests of Turkey. Lord Salisbury adhered to his opinion that Turkey could not be maintained permanently, and in this he represented English public opinion, which was in favour of the Christian nations in the Balkans, and regarded them as the upholders of civilisation and progress against the backward and barbarous Turks. There is no clear need to attribute any further motive to his attitude; but may he really have wished the collapse to happen as soon as possible, Russia to occupy Constantinople, Austria to declare war on Russia and summon the Triple Alliance to its aid, and so let loose a general war? Was he planning, while Europe was defending the Straits for England, to send the British fleet thither at the critical moment and compel Russia to come to terms, securing Britain's interests at the cost of the Continental Powers? Count Hatzfeldt thought it at least not impossible, and he was a shrewd man whose opinions cannot be disregarded. Possibly, however, his distrust led him astray. English policy was more inclined to take things as they came than to think out such far-reaching plans, the fulfilment of which depended on future contingencies. In any case, England was completely isolated in the Eastern question, and had finally, though under protest, to fall into line with the other Powers. In the East the Continental League seemed to gather strength and justify itself. The Kaiser wrote proudly to the Czar that it was evident "if the whole Continent kept an unbroken front, the rest of the world must follow us, even the strongest."[1] The Triple Alliance, which had been quietly renewed for six years as no notification had been given by either side, seemed to have coalesced with the Franco-Russian group into one solid block.

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[1] Letter of March 5th, 1897 (Goetz, 42).

But, as we know, the thought was constantly in the background that the only real object of this approach to the Dual Alliance was to alarm England and force her into a definite agreement with the Triple Alliance. Feelers were continually being put out in London. The Kaiser once remarked to the English Ambassador that as Germany could not develop all her colonies at the same time, it might perhaps be best to retain one and to exchange the others with England for coaling-stations.[1] Hatzfeldt took an opportunity in London of remarking that Germany was still ready to conclude a definite alliance, but Salisbury replied that even though it were to England's interest, it was contrary in principle to English tradition.[2] Marschall was quite convinced that the idea of a continental league was not within the scope of practical politics, at least so far as concerned aggressive action against England. A common defence of individual interests threatened by England was preferable, especially the frustration of any British plans which tended to produce friction between the Continental Powers. His great desire was to maintain the co-operation of the Continental Powers "until the present Turkish avalanche had been brought to a stand-still." Hence the possibility of co-operation must always be left open to England. In Vienna they were still more sceptical. When the German Ambassador mentioned the idea of the continental league Count Goluchowski said, "I would never consent to it"; for Austria's one foe was Russia.[3] Nevertheless Germany still continued to play with this possibility and represented it to England as a working combination free from any special difficulties.

Baron von Marschall's resignation, which occurred in June, 1897, made no change in Germany's policy. He went to Constantinople as Ambassador and was succeeded as Secretary of State by Bernhard von Bülow, till then Ambassador at Rome. Bülow immediately told the French representative that the two countries must gradually seek to forget the "historic obstacle" which separated them, and, although without any stipulated treaty, aim at diplomatic action on parallel lines wherever they had interests in common.[1]

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[1] Marschall's notes, November 24th, 1896 (*Grosse Politik*, xi. 385 and xiii. 7).

[2] Hatzfeldt, December 2nd and 10th, 1896 (*Grosse Politik*, xii. 66).

[3] Eulenburg, September 21st, 1896.

In August, 1897, he accompanied the Kaiser to Peterhof, where the two Sovereigns testified to the absolute unanimity of their policy in the most important questions.[2] For the first time since the peace of Shimonoseki the Far Eastern problem again cropped up. As we know, Germany's attitude at that time was conditioned by the wish to gain, with Russia's help, a coaling-station on the Chinese coast. The Czar had personally agreed, but only in a vague fashion, to support this wish. Meanwhile at Berlin they had definitely fixed upon Kiau-Chou, although aware that this harbour had been put at the disposal of Russia for the time being as winter-quarters for her Asiatic squadron.[3] When more definite news came in of the great advantages that Russia had secured in Northern China, a claim was put forward in general terms reminding China of the services Germany had rendered by her intervention, and adding the scarcely veiled threat that she was prepared to act even without China's consent (June 19th, 1896).[4] The draft of a treaty granting a long lease had actually been already prepared. But as Russia was then in possession of the Bay of Kiau-Chou, though, according to Chinese assurances, without having obtained any permanent right to it, the Kaiser took occasion to mention the subject at Peterhof. The Czar replied that the harbour was valuable to him so long as he had no other, but he had no objection to it being used also by German warships ; as soon as Russia evacuated the harbour he would offer no obstacle to its complete transference into German hands. In September the German Government informed St. Petersburg that they intended to request permission from China to allow German warships to winter there, but of course they would make arrangements with the Russian Commander before their arrival. As no opposition was offered, a request on these lines was sent to Pekin, where they did not dare to raise any protest.[1] However, when in October the Russian Admiral was notified of the impending arrival of the German vessels, the Russian Government declared that they expected not a mere notification but a preliminary understanding based on the previous agreement.[2] At the same time it was learned through the German Ambassador in Pekin that the harbour had been secretly leased to Russia for fifteen years with the right of constructing docks. While they were debating in Berlin what to do now, the German Catholic Mission building in South Shantung was attacked by Chinese and two missionaries lost their lives (November 4th). The Kaiser immediately issued orders to advance at all costs ; he would let them see that he was not to be trifled with and that it was a bad thing to have him for an enemy.[3] The Imperial Chancellor lodged impossible claims for compensation with the express purpose of " exploiting the occurrence in order to obtain possession of Kiau-Chou or some other place." [4] In the Kaiser's opinion we had come to a turning-point for our prestige in Eastern Asia and the eyes of the whole world were waiting on his decisions. As Hohenlohe had told him that, after the conversations at Peterhof, a preliminary agreement with Russia was necessary for any permanent occupation of Kiau-Chou, he consented to it, although he considered it humiliating that the German Empire should have to request permission at St. Petersburg to protect and avenge the Christians under its care in China. It was only from excessive modesty that we had not acted boldly three years ago. He telegraphed immediately to the Czar, but the reply merely stated that the Czar would neither grant nor forbid permission, as, though he was certainly using the harbour, he had not received it ; and he feared great excitement and unrest would result from this step. The Kaiser did not share this dread, and ordered the Admiral in command in the Far East to sail for Kiau-Chou.[5]

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[1] Report No. 285 from a memorandum of the Duc de Noailles of June 18th, 1897.

[2] Bülow to the Foreign Office, August 17th, 1897.

[3] Gutschmid's report, 16th December, 1895.

[4] Marschall's report of his conversation with the Chinese Ambassador, June 19th, 1896 (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 27).

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[1] Despatch to Heyking, September 25th; Heyking's report, October 1st (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 61).

[2] Tschirschky, October 14th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 62).

[3] Telegram from the Kaiser to the Foreign Office, November 6th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 67).

[4] Telegram to Heyking, November 7th.

[5] Telegram from the Kaiser to Bülow, November 7th.

In spite of the Czar's very indefinite reply, the Russian Government was far from intending simply to hand over Kiau-Chou to the Germans. Muravieff sent word to Berlin that if German warships came on the scene, Russian ships would do likewise, as in the transfer of this harbour to a foreign Power, Russia had a prior claim. He advised them to look elsewhere for compensation for the murder of the missionaries, a solution which had already commended itself to China. He thought it possible England and France would also send warships to Kiau-Chou.[1] The Under Secretary of State, von Rotenhan, in Bülow's absence, requested further instructions, for he knew the Kaiser had no wish for a breach with Russia. The Kaiser, however, termed the Russian interference an impertinence. Nothing had been said to him about Russia's prior claim; if Russia had any real rights we could buy them from her. The orders to the fleet held good. Russia, he said, would soon yield to a *fait accompli* and as she required us in the East she would certainly not begin war for the sake of Kiau-Chou. Hohenlohe ventured a few timid remonstrances as to whether our trade in China might not be ruined by Russians, French and Chinese to England's advantage, but he adopted a haughty tone with Muravieff, and suggested he had been misinformed as to the agreements previously come to. Nevertheless the Imperial Chancellor felt very uncomfortable about the whole situation and looked around for some other suitable place outside the English sphere of influence in case they were obliged to evacuate Kiau-Chou.[2] On November 14th a German squadron under Admiral von Diederichs occupied Kiau-Chou.

Muravieff did indeed protest against the German interpretation of the Czar's telegram. The Russians were now told that their warships might remain there also, and they were reminded that Germany, by her attitude in 1895, had rendered possible the great expansion of the Russian sphere of influence in Eastern Asia. From the Czar's telegram we had been obliged to conclude that Russia raised no claim to the possession of Kiau-Chou. Now we could no longer withdraw.[1] From China came the news that binding agreements with Russia about Kiau-Chou did not hold good, Li Hung Chang having arbitrarily consented to the Russian occupation of this harbour in the event of war.[2] The Russians, who did not want war, finally gave way. Their renunciation was made easier for them owing to the fact that Kiau-Chou proved too remote as a permanent base for their fleet. Muravieff announced that the Russian fleet would meanwhile occupy Port Arthur and remain there until a definite settlement of the new order of things had been reached. He said he himself was convinced of the loyalty of Germany's intentions, although her rapid and forcible intervention had been disconcerting, but the Czar would probably resent it.[3] Germany at once agreed to the occupation of Port Arthur by the Russians, which took place in the end of December.[4] The Kaiser sent a telegram to the Czar, expressing his delight at the settlement they had reached. It was for Russia and Germany, at the entrance to the Yellow Sea, as representatives of St. George and St. Michael, to defend the Holy Cross in the East. He renewed his whole-hearted support for the further great plans of the Czar.[5] This offer was immediately turned to account. Russia, in return for her support of German demands in China, requested the recognition of Manchuria, Chinese Turkestan and the province of Pechili, as Russian spheres of interest. German military instructors were not to be employed there. Only the last item was granted; the other demands were not actually accepted, but they were not declined.[6] In all this support of Russia's policy of expansion Germany never lost sight of the fact that it was not desirable to weaken Japan unduly as we might need her some day as an ally, and Russia and France would be all the more disposed to co-operate with us if Japan made herself troublesome to them.[1]

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[1] Urgent report from von Rotenhan, November 10th. Telegraphic reply from the Kaiser and Rotenhan's report to Bülow, November 11th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 73, 77).

[2] Urgent report from Hohenlohe, November 11th. Despatch to Hatzfeldt, November 13th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 78, 81).

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[1] Muravieff's statement, November 17th; report of November 18th; memorandum from Holstein, November 21st (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 90).

[2] Heyking, November 25th.

[3] Radolin, December 14th. Despatch to Hatzfeldt, December 19th.

[4] Bülow to Osten Sacken, December 17th.

[5] Kaiser's telegram to the Czar on December 19th, "May you be able fully to realise the plans you have so often unrolled to me. My sympathy and help shall not fail in case of need" (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 129).

[6] Communication from Osten Sacken, January 2nd, 1898. Bülow's note, January 2nd. Despatch to Radolin, January 3rd (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 134).

China made a few more excuses and urged that England and Japan might also demand a seaport if Germany got one. They also declared in Pekin that at the beginning of December, Russia had held out the prospect of her support against Germany in return for the transfer of concessions in quarries and railways in the northern provinces, and the appointment of Russian military instructors.[2] We cannot verify this with any certainty, but it is not unlikely. In the end the Chinese gave way; the demands for indemnities were granted, Kiau-Chou, with all its prerogatives, was leased to Germany by treaty on March 6th, 1898, and in the neighbourhood of Shantung important concessions for quarries and railways were handed over. Russia received as compensation not only Port Arthur, but also Talien-wan; England, Wei-Hai-Wei and an extension of territory near Hong-Kong; and France, the Bay of Kwang-Chou in southern China. Japan alone went away empty-handed.

Germany's sudden intervention had secured a momentary success without permanently disturbing her relations with Russia. Nevertheless in St. Petersburg they disliked Germany's establishing herself in Eastern Asia, and for a brief moment things looked threatening. It was certainly a warning not to trust too far to Russia's goodwill. It remained to be seen whether this acquisition would be helpful or detrimental to the general political situation of Germany. The causes of friction with the other Powers had nevertheless increased; we had acquired a distant territory almost impossible to defend in time of war without the help of the neighbouring Powers, although, so long as peace lasted, it was certainly a good base for our commerce and our prestige in the Far East.

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[1] Bülow's note, January 2nd, 1898 (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 135).

[2] Heyking, December 16th, 1897 (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 123).

## V. CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFER OF AN ALLIANCE

For years past Germany had been angling for an alliance with England, but the Island Empire proved impervious to blandishments, and did not let herself be beguiled into any alliance, either through good nature or through German coquetry with the other Powers. Suddenly, however, the positions were reversed and the wooed became the wooer. Britain proposed an alliance.

At the close of 1897 the position on both sides was still unchanged. When it looked as if Russia was about to make serious difficulties over Kiau-Chou, Bülow felt that our relations with England were responsible for the opposition we were encountering. He therefore judged it prudent to advise Hatzfeldt to make discreet inquiry as to whether it was possible to bring about some small but gradual improvement, "an aim that we must never lose sight of." He was to point out that if Russia forced us to renounce Kiau-Chou we might require to take as compensation a harbour in southern China, that is, in the English sphere of influence. Bülow would have preferred some outward and visible token of friendliness on England's part, in Samoa, for instance, which could be used for putting pressure on Russia.[1] We were evidently counting on England's desire to escape from her isolation, which had repeatedly made itself unpleasantly felt. To add further to Britain's uneasiness, he was to hint that Russia had offered an alliance against England, although all the support for that statement was a casual private remark from General Obrucheff to Bülow during the Czar's visit to Homburg.[2]

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[1] Despatches to Hatzfeldt, November 13th and 16th, 1897 (*Grosse Politik* xiv. 81 and 86).

[2] Bülow to the Foreign Office, September 13th (*Grosse Politik*, xiii. 88). Obrucheff had certainly indicated that Count Muravieff had commissioned him to speak. His proposal was for a league of Continental Powers to uphold the *status quo* for three years. *Vide* also Hatzfeldt to Holstein, November 18th; Bülow to Holstein, November 19th; despatch to Hatzfeldt, November 19th (*Grosse Politik*, xiii. 90, and xiv. 94).

The Ambassador thought it prudent to initiate matters by offering Germany's support in case England wished to protest against the annexation of Hawaii by the United States, which had just been sanctioned by the Government at Washington. In return for this a concession on the Samoan question was expected as a suitable equivalent. There were serious drawbacks to the united protectorate over these islands by England, America and Germany, which had existed since 1889, and it was to be feared that after their annexation of Hawaii the United States would insist more firmly on their rights, so as to increase their influence in the South Seas. But Lord Salisbury showed little interest in Hawaii and had evidently no desire to get on bad terms with America. Hatzfeldt then declared that he had only suggested this as a means of promoting some form of co-operation with England no matter where, and gradually he led the conversation round to Eastern Asia. Salisbury, however, merely said that he personally had no objection to the German occupation of Kiau-Chou, provided that the point, which he must first ascertain, did not actually lie within the English sphere of interest. Hatzfeldt indicated that if Germany found no support from England she would be compelled to consent to far-reaching concessions to Russia in Eastern Asia, a prospect that seemed distasteful to the English Premier.[1]

Again Hatzfeldt urgently warned his Government not to give German policy a strong Russian bias. Even the possession of half China would not outweigh the disadvantages of such a tie. Far better make some concessions to England in the Transvaal and Delagoa Bay. He evidently had no suspicion of how deeply we were already committed to follow Russia.

In subsequent conversations Lord Salisbury showed himself ready for an agreement over the frontiers in the hinterland of Togo, and also for a surrender of British rights in Samoa in exchange for German New Guinea or some other German possession. Hatzfeldt sought to prove to him that every friendly understanding would improve their relations and react upon the European situation, but Salisbury reminded him bitterly of the Kruger telegram and of Germany's action in Zanzibar. Hatzfeldt gathered the impression that a definite improvement in their relations was not attainable if there were difficulties in Eastern Asia, and that circumstances seemed rather to favour England's co-operation with Russia and France.[1] After the Kiau-Chou difficulty had been solved and the understanding between Russia and Germany, so distasteful to England, renewed, Russia and France having extended their possessions in China, the English Government suddenly took a step forward. The movement certainly did not originate with the wise and wary Lord Salisbury. He still adhered to the old tradition that England was strong enough by herself and did not need to restrict her freedom of action by alliances. But within the Cabinet there was a group who thought otherwise; their leader was Joseph Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary, one of the most resourceful and far-sighted of English statesmen since Disraeli. He was not in general friendly to Germany; he was in close touch with Cecil Rhodes, and keenly resented Germany's intervention on behalf of the Boers. Possibly, however, it was his aggressive policy in South Africa that induced him to make overtures to Germany. In West Africa no agreement had been reached with France as to the delimitation of the spheres of influence in the Niger territory. The English expedition in the Soudan was to reach Khartoum during the year; a conflict with France seemed not improbable, for it was known in London that Major Marchand with his expedition was also on his way to the Upper Nile Valley, and already in December, 1897, word was sent to Paris that England could not allow any other Power the right to seize territory there. Chamberlain was even then aware of the likelihood of a final breach with the Boer State. The struggle in Cuba between the United States and Spain was already beginning and it might easily spread to Eastern Asia and affect English interests. Hence, in view of the possibilities ahead, it was certainly desirable to know what to expect from Germany. During February several confidential interviews took place between Chamberlain and Hatzfeldt, and in the end of March Chamberlain brought forward certain concrete proposals. Lord Balfour also took part in the deliberations, and both Ministers affirmed that their statements were based on the decisions of the Cabinet and were therefore authorised by the Government.[1]

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[1] Hatzfeldt, November 17th; private letter to Holstein, November 18th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 92-94).

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[1] Hatzfeldt, November 20th and December 11th, 1897 (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 96 and 116).

The gist of their arguments was: England could not continue in her isolation; she wanted allies who would work with her for the maintenance of peace. Germany and England had many small disputes on colonial matters, but no widely divergent interests. If Germany stood by England, England was ready to support her if she was attacked. That would be like co-operating with the Triple Alliance. Anything more definite would need to be laid down by treaty in which Germany would be required to formulate her terms. Hatzfeldt's fear lest England might ultimately leave her allies in the lurch, Chamberlain declared to be unfounded. He admitted that the treaty, to be permanent, must be passed by Parliament, and had no doubt as to its ready acceptance. Balfour, however, was somewhat sceptical on that point. To remove Hatzfeldt's lurking suspicion that England was only waiting to drive us into a conflict with Russia, Chamberlain expressly stated that they were prepared to recognise Port Arthur, Talien-wan, and the whole of Manchuria, as the Russian sphere of influence, provided there was no further Russian aggression to the South. Until a general agreement had been reached, they could gradually, by mutual concessions in all minor matters, improve their relations and prepare public opinion. Finally Chamberlain declared that if this natural alliance between England and Germany were not attained, an understanding with France and Russia was not impossible. The only directly contentious matters with Russia were in Eastern Asia and on the Indian frontiers. With France they would arrange eventually that both parties should formulate their claims in the various parts of the world and then reach a settlement by mutual concessions.

Chamberlain thus laid all his cards on the table, which was characteristic of the man and of his aversion from diplomatic mystery-mongering. But to Hatzfeldt, from the point of view of the traditional secret diplomacy, this method of pursuing politics seemed amateurish, uncouth and ill-judged. He termed Chamberlain haughtily an "ignorant novice," which was certainly unjust. Chamberlain acted like a shrewd, experienced business man who was seeking to bring about a fusion of interests with a powerful competitor before he decided on risking the incalculable chances of battle. The Ambassador contented himself mostly with listening, made a few suggestions and retailed everything carefully to Berlin.

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[1] Cf. Eckardstein's *Lebenserinnerungen*, i 292. Hatzfeldt, March 29th, April 1st, 5th, 7th, 23rd, 26th, 1898 (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 196-221).

Here they recognised how serious was the decision which had to be taken. Their first thought naturally was that a treaty not sanctioned by Parliament would only bind the Government in power and might become obsolete on a change of Government if there was a desire to revoke the stipulations. They did not feel that Chamberlain's offer of Parliamentary sanction altogether did away with this difficulty. For public opinion in England was hostile to Germany, and acceptance was very doubtful, and sure to provoke sharp opposition in Parliament. The question was what would happen if the treaty were agreed upon between the two Governments and made public, and then Parliament rejected it? Then, said Bülow, we should be hopelessly compromised with Russia. On a previous occasion Russia had warned Berlin that "the only danger to peace would arise if we were forced to the conviction that Germany had come to a definite agreement with England threatening the balance of power."[1] So Russia might perhaps feel herself obliged to join with France and strike rapidly at Germany, before this unsuccessful attempt could be renewed with better effect. Free now from ties to either side, England could afford to look on calmly at a struggle of this kind and later on come forward as arbitrator. Moreover, English ironclads could do little to help us on our eastern frontier. Hence the doubt if it were worth while incurring such a risk, and if there were sufficiently strong grounds for doing so. Bülow felt that whatever the future might bring, at present there was no near or at least visible danger threatening Germany and therefore no reason for "risking the hazardous game of concluding treaties." It would be different if England were convinced that she could not loosen the Franco-Russian Alliance and could gain nothing without giving equivalent compensation. Furthermore, public opinion in Germany had now become strongly hostile to England, though that might perhaps alter if France and Russia drew closer and England felt more keenly the dangers resulting therefrom. Hence it was desirable to keep the alliance in view as a future possibility and not to endanger its chance of success by harsh methods of dealing with passing difficulties, nor to bring it to the fore-front at present, unless compelled by circumstances. Holstein expressed the fear that by adopting an English policy we might ultimately find ourselves in opposition to Austria and so imperil the Triple Alliance. A few colonial concessions, he declared, was all England would give us for a war with Russia. That was too cheap. His personal view of the matter was that the possibility of the alliance should only be considered: "1st, if Russia threatened us; 2nd, if England showed herself less overbearing than at present."[1] The Kaiser himself was very sceptical. England had forfeited her value as an ally for us since she had concentrated her policy wholly on Asiatic and African questions and had lost interest in European matters, even in the maintenance of Turkey. "The Niger and the Gulf of Pechili matter far less to us than Alsace-Lorraine." The Franco-Russian Alliance would become much closer if we identified ourselves with England. "If England should in the future come to need support over European matters, we could approach closer to her than at present." But, he declared, we must not allow England's hope of an alliance to grow cold. "A friendly England gives us a spare card against Russia, and besides that, there is a prospect of our requiring colonial and commercial treaties from England." If the offer were declined outright, "in the present rabid mood of the English Cabinet," a rapprochement with France would not be unlikely.[2]

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[1] Radolin, June 23rd, 1896.

Bülow advised England to renew her old treaty with Italy and Austria on Mediterranean questions, but at the same time he pointed out that for German neutrality in an Anglo-Russian war, sufficient to make France keep her sword sheathed, adequate compensations would be required. Germany indeed did not desire war: "We have used every endeavour to prevent war, no matter by whom and against whom, and almost without exception with success." An Anglo-Russian understanding would be all the more welcome to us because it would make the French alliance less indispensable to Russia.[1]

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[1] Holstein's remarks on Hatzfeldt's report of April 26th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 226).

[2] The Kaiser to the Foreign Office, April 10th, after perusal of the comprehensive despatch specially written for him by Hatzfeldt on April 7th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 217).

To the advice to join again with Austria and Italy, Chamberlain opposed the aversion of public opinion in England from guaranteeing the maintenance of Turkey, at which Austria was aiming. England's concern was not with these States, but with Germany; the others would then follow as a matter of course. He again pointed out forcibly the possibility of an understanding with Russia and France.[2]

Toward the end of April, Bülow drew up the following summary: Chamberlain will start a sort of auction between France and Germany, giving Germany the chance of the first bid. But as France would not allow herself to be committed to do anything against Russia for however high a reward, we can safely let him make the attempt in Paris; and he will then be forced to see that England is deluding herself if she thinks she has the choosing of her allies. When this is recognised in London, or when we are really threatened by Russia, it will be time to discuss the matter afresh.[3]

In further conversation with Lord Salisbury, Count Hatzfeldt directed his remarks so as to avoid an alliance for the present without destroying the hope of a future agreement. Salisbury himself believed that treaties concluded before the occurrence of the circumstance provided for did not always prove workable. For parliamentary reasons a binding agreement with a foreign Power—here he was plainly hinting at Chamberlain's plan—was not feasible. In this conversation he used the words, "you expect too much for your friendship."

Hatzfeldt gathered the impression that although Lord Salisbury had consented to the overture, he had all along been sceptical of any results from Chamberlain's brusque methods, especially in the event of any provocation from Russia in the Far East. But at the same time he strongly warned Berlin to expect very little from England in the way of concessions or courtesy if all hope of permanent co-operation in matters of world-wide policy was finally destroyed.[1]

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[1] Despatch to Hatzfeldt, April 24th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 218).

[2] Hatzfeldt, April 26th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 218, 221).

[3] Despatch to Hatzfeldt, April 30th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 227).

Was it by accident or design that immediately after Lord Salisbury's distinctly chilling comments, Chamberlain openly took the line of winning over public opinion to his plans? On May 13th he made a speech in Birmingham, in which he said in pretty plain language that in his view, England's interests required an alliance with Germany in addition to good relations with the United States. England's great interests in China, he said, could not be defended against Russia without an ally. Hence they ought not to reject the idea of an alliance with those Powers whose interests were akin to those of England.

Hatzfeldt took advantage of these statements to raise the question once more with Salisbury. He began by suggesting cautiously only mutual accommodations in lesser matters. The Premier expressed his willingness, but remarked that England could not always be the one who gave. Hatzfeldt replied that in colonial matters England had almost everything; we, very little; hence it was easier for her than for us to give up something. She was now preparing to incorporate within her empire the last available portions of the world and might well allow Germany a reasonable share in her gains. But Salisbury was silent, because, Hatzfeldt thought, France and Russia had made him suspicious, and he feared that Germany would bring forward colonial demands that could not be granted.[2]

To the Austrian Ambassador Lord Salisbury declared that Chamberlain's speech had simply been a *ballon d'essai*. Moreover, it was a mistake to speak as if the conclusion of an alliance ran counter to English tradition, as witness England's co-operation with France during the Crimean War. He indicated that he was ready for a colonial agreement with Germany provided she did not ask too much.[3]

Hatzfeldt tried in vain to induce England to make more definite offers in colonial matters. His impression was that a rapprochement would be welcomed, but that there was an absence of thorough mutual understanding between Salisbury and Chamberlain through personal rivalry. Salisbury, he declared, wanted an understanding as a means of keeping the peace; Chamberlain wanted us as an ally against Russia in the Far East. If once the conviction took root that nothing was to be expected of Germany, the disappointment would be great; but English policy would not change its general course so long as they believed us not to be firmly bound to an enemy group. He considered it his task " to work by leisurely but friendly efforts for an alliance with Germany and so to act that the way was left open for an understanding later on." [1]

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[1] Hatzfeldt, May 12th and 14th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 229 and 230 n.).

[2] Hatzfeldt, May 20th; Lichnowsky, May 23rd (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 235).

[3] Hatzfeldt, May 22nd (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 239 n.).

The Kaiser expressed his agreement with this line of thought, but in his marginal comments he expressed his pained surprise that England always expected definite answers and acceptances from us while offering nothing definite herself. How could Salisbury be afraid of our making extravagant demands " when he neither offers us anything nor asks for anything ? " [2]

Things had evidently come to a stand-still. Neither side was willing to make a further move. Suddenly, on his own initiative it seems, without consulting anyone, the Kaiser took an extremely risky step. On May 30th, 1898, he wrote to the Czar telling him that three times in the last few weeks England had talked of an alliance—the last time requiring an answer within a brief time limit—and held out wonderful prospects of a brilliant future for his country. Before answering he wanted to tell the Czar as his friend, for it was a matter of life and death. As the Triple Alliance, Japan and the United States would all be included, the alliance could only be directed against Russia. " Now as my old and trusty friend I beg you to tell me what you can offer and what you will do for me if I refuse ? " He also indicated that France might possibly be drawn into some combination if desired by the Czar.[3] Thus under the threatening pressure of an Anglo-German alliance the old idea of a continental league had quickly reached the stage preparatory to a treaty. The offers made by us were not further defined, but nevertheless they seemed to acquire dimensions which they certainly did not possess. And at this very time the Kaiser was lamenting that England would not say what she was prepared to offer ! The English alliance, which we had not even decided to accept at present, was being used as a weapon to force Russia out of her reserve into a treaty-bound alliance. Possibly, however, the Kaiser was only aiming at extracting an overture from Russia in order to use it against England.

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[1] Hatzfeldt, June 2nd and 3rd (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 240).

[2] Marginal comment on Hatzfeldt's despatch of June 3rd.

[3] Goetz, p. 50.

There is an undated note from the Kaiser which must have been written shortly before the sending of this letter.[1] He therein seeks to clear up the motives and possibilities of the English offer. In the first place, the offer seems to him to be due to anxiety as to the consequences of the new German naval laws which had just been passed, as in future the German fleet, in union with others, would be a menace to England. " Hence the intention either to force us into an alliance, or, as was done with Holland, to crush us before we had become strong enough." Also, however, the offer may have been honourably intended. In that case acceptance would be highly beneficial in future and our enormous commerce would be safeguarded.

> " How long Russia and France will keep the peace out of anxiety at such a combination is certainly doubtful but not incalculable. On the other hand if we reject England and obtain a firm alliance with Russia—an essential condition for refusal—England can then break up France and crush us down along with her, totally destroying our entire trade, as it is still defenceless and Russia cannot help to protect it. But on the continent we could throw the whole weight of our army, reinforced if necessary by Russia, against France with overwhelming force and save our own empire."

Here we see the motive underlying the letter to the Czar coming to the surface. The first thing is to find out if a firm alliance with Russia is obtainable before deciding finally about the English offer. If it is impossible, England must on no account be let drop ; if it is available, the pros and cons of the two alliances must be very carefully weighed. Owing to the difficulty of deciding, the Kaiser evidently wished at least to clear up one point and used the questionable means of trying to entice the Czar into a definite reply by the indiscreet and exaggerated statements in his letter. He seemed to have lost sight for the time being of the effect of a Russian alliance on

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[1] A copy of it was submitted to the Foreign Office on May 31st (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 239).

Austria and the Triple Alliance. On June 3rd the Czar replied that the Kaiser must himself know what to do in this difficult matter, all the more so as he had not been told what was the real substance of the English offer. But he could tell him something interesting. About three months ago England had offered in writing a complete understanding on all disputed points on highly advantageous conditions. But its very goodness had made him suspicious: he had concluded that England needed him for the time being and had declined without giving the matter a second thought. Besides, he was on very good terms with Japan and the United States and he hoped to continue to have the friendliest relations with Germany.[1]

So no counter offer had come from Russia, but instead of it a most surprising discovery. Bülow, to whom the Kaiser showed the letter, thought it impossible to doubt the truth of the facts communicated by the Czar. The Kaiser's distrust of England was triumphantly justified; greater prudence than ever was now needed. However careful one was in drafting a treaty with England it would always be a threat to Russia. At the very most they might consent to the settlement of specific minor matters.[2]

The Kaiser expressed himself much more drastically: England was really giving us nothing but wanted to compromise us by vague inducements and finally put us off with a few small mouthfuls. If by our attitude we were to assist her in extending her power, she must pay us handsomely. Her aim was not to belong to Europe any more, but to establish herself as an independent continent between Europe and America or Asia.[3]

Russia had thus been completely successful in her design of fomenting the German leaders' distrust of England. Well might they rub their hands at St. Petersburg!

In Berlin, however, they did not go so far as to break off the negotiations with England. Holstein held that every settlement with England would have its effect on Russia and lessen the security of our eastern frontier. In the same way every settlement with Russia would affect England and increase or diminish our prospects of colonial success. "Hence without immediate and urgent cause, we ought not to ally ourselves with either side," an opinion in which Bülow fully concurred.[1] Hatzfeldt, therefore, continued to discuss the question with Lord Salisbury academically and Bülow did the same with Lascelles.[2] The hope thereby encouraged in London that something would be achieved in time led at least to a special agreement as to the future of the Portuguese colonies in Africa.

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[1] The Czar to the Kaiser, June 3rd (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 250).

[2] Despatch to Hatzfeldt, June 8th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 251).

[3] Marginal note on Hatzfeldt's dispatch on June 3rd and on that of the Ambassador at Washington, von Holleben, of April 22nd.

This arose out of the request from Portugal for a loan which London was prepared to grant only in return for a mortgage on her colonial possessions, for Portugal was constantly in financial difficulties. As Lord Salisbury was only too well aware of Germany's sensitiveness in African matters he discussed the proposal with Hatzfeldt, who immediately stated that Germany also had an interest in the future of these colonies and could not stand idly by while England secured the revenues there for herself, so that later on the possession of the whole territory might fall into her lap like ripe fruit. He proposed an agreement dealing with the future claims of both parties in case Portugal might some day be compelled to give up her colonies. As he hinted that he would be willing to leave Delagoa Bay to the English, Lord Salisbury thought the proposal not unfavourable. In the event of a Boer War, German attempts at intervention, such as were under consideration in 1896, could best be prevented from this side.[3] Bülow granted this concession, which ran directly counter to Marschall's earlier Boer policy. He had no sentimental feeling for the Boers, but it was necessary to get an adequate equivalent.[4] The negotiations lasted for some time, but were very friendly, in spite of occasional sarcastic hits from Lord Salisbury at the Kruger telegram and Germany's behaviour in Zanzibar—he even indulged in the absolutely senseless gibe that Germany would have liked all Africa for herself—in spite also of strenuous haggling over every move. On the English side the negotiations were finally conducted by Balfour, Salisbury, it seems, having only reluctantly consented under pressure from his colleagues to accept the agreement. Other questions—Walfish Bay, Zanzibar, the Togo frontiers, Samoa—were not discussed after all, although Berlin had sent word, if the opportunity occurred, to propose a mutual adjustment of all colonial disputed points.[1] Evidently the sum total of Germany's demands was too high for England, unless at least a general alliance were concluded at the same time.

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[1] Bülow passed on Holstein's despatch almost word for word to the Kaiser on June 5th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 248).

[2] Bülow's comment on a conversation with Lascelles, June 11th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 253).

[3] Hatzfeldt, June 21st, July 6th and 13th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 270, 281, 293).

[4] Telegram from Bülow to Richthofen, July 16th, forwarded to Hatzfeldt (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 296).

This wish was again brought forward in August in course of a conversation with the Kaiser. The English Ambassador, Lascelles, on Chamberlain's advice, outlined the proposal for concluding a defensive alliance "on condition that both sides pledged themselves to mutual assistance whenever one or other of them was attacked from two sides." The Kaiser replied that such definite proposals had never before been made. He was not averse from discussing them if they were repeated in official form. He felt that an agreement of such a nature did not bind us to help the English in Eastern Asia against the Russians and would really be a sort of insurance policy which the Czar could not misconstrue.[2]

Bülow and Holstein, however, saw to it that this wish did not take too deep root. Bülow expressed his gratification that the Kaiser had plainly told the English Ambassador he would not pull the chestnuts out of the Russian fire to save John Bull's fingers. At the same time he implied that he considered war between Russia and England inevitable even without outside pressure. In a war for English interests in Eastern Asia the Kaiser would certainly not wish to be liable for military support, because "in any conceivable war between the Anglo-German Alliance and two Powers, the military burden would fall mainly, and in a war against two of our colonial neighbours, almost exclusively, on our shoulders." He advised further friendship with England without compromising the relations with the Czar so that the Kaiser "in complete independence of both sides as *arbiter mundi* could be present at the 80th anniversary of Queen Victoria's birthday."[1] It was dangerous, seductive advice from the Secretary of State to his Sovereign, whose self-assurance was quite sufficiently developed. Arbiter of the world! That meant no alliance with either of the disputing parties.

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[1] Despatch to Hatzfeldt, July 12th, "A mutual adjustment of all outstanding colonial disputes, either by a secret or by an open agreement, is highly desirable" (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 292).

[2] The Kaiser to the Foreign Office, 22nd August (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 333).

At the same time Holstein defined his views in a controversial sharply-worded memorandum.[2] A general agreement with England would be a signal for Russia, who would then consider Germany in Asia as an opponent, to bring about a situation which made France's co-operation obligatory, possibly in South Africa. If, on the other hand, co-operation with England were strictly limited to African questions and Russia were previously informed, it would give that Power an interest in regulating her movements against England so that Germany would not be involved, and in dissuading France from making African questions the starting-point of a conflict. In this way we might acquire the desired share of the Portuguese colonies without risking a war with Russia and France in which we should necessarily bear the main burden ourselves.

All the characteristic features of Holstein's mode of thought are here apparent. He was convinced that Russia meant to go to war with England, and France either with England or Germany; also, that if France were sure of Russia's support, she would make the partitioning of the Portuguese colonies the cause of war. From these premises, which were undoubtedly absolutely false, inevitable inferences were deduced with great shrewdness.

The official proposal for a defensive alliance from the English side, which might now have been expected, did not materialise. But even had it done so, in the present mood of Bülow and Holstein it could not have received other than dilatory treatment. The negotiations for the Portuguese colonies, on the other hand, were now nearing completion. Towards the end the Kaiser again intervened. He considered Salisbury's conduct insolent, and traced it to his lack of anxiety about us because we had no fleet, the Reichstag during the ten years of his reign having persistently refused to grant him one. He forbade any further concessions, and even went to the length of telling Lascelles to say that if England did not accept our last proposals the further presence of the German Ambassador in London would be superfluous for the present. England must accustom herself to the idea that Germany required a colonial empire and that she meant to develop one with or without Great Britain.[1] These temperamental outbursts of the Kaiser were not taken seriously in London, where they had already had sufficient experience of them. On August 30th the treaty was concluded. In the event of Portugal desiring a loan, the larger share was to be taken by England, the smaller by Germany, simultaneously, but not in common. The revenues in the northern part of Angola and the southern part of Mozambique were to be allocated to England as security: those of south Angola and the district of Mozambique lying north of the Zambesi, and also of the Portuguese portion of the island of Timor in the South Seas, to Germany, and both Powers were to be allowed the right of supervising the collection of the customs. Further, Germany promised to raise no opposition if, after the supervision of the customs had been set up, the control of the harbour of Lorenço Marques and of the railway down to Pretoria was handed over entirely to England. It was also agreed that they would mutually oppose the intrusion of any third Power. If Portugal wanted to evacuate her colonies, England and Germany were to receive those portions of the territory where they already had the control of the customs. If there was only a partial evacuation neither of the two Powers was to take possession of territory without the other receiving an equivalent.[2]

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[1] Bülow to the Kaiser, August 24th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 339).

[2] Holstein's memorandum, August 26th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 342).

Germany, as was seen later on, had greatly underestimated Portugal's financial resources. Probably in England they were better informed and knew that the contingency provided for was not likely to happen within measurable time. Also, as was soon evident, they had no desire to hasten that event, Germany's disinterestedness with regard to Lorenco Marques being thoroughly satisfactory for British interests; and owing to the great influence they had long exercised at Lisbon, they felt no urgent desire to receive a part of the Portuguese colonies if in return for it they had to hand over the other part to Germany. Nevertheless the agreement was valuable not only because of the prospects it opened up for the future, but most of all because it diminished the causes of friction with England and might be considered by the British Ministers as the first step towards those better relations which they desired. England could certainly have annexed Lorenço Marques and the whole of the Portuguese colonies in spite of our protest, which would have had no appreciable effect. She chose, however, to win our consent by concessions that involved a sacrifice of her own future prospects and thereby felt she had shown great consideration. All the same, it was open to doubt whether the German statesmen would consider concessions made at the expense of a foreign Power, and depending on the uncertain hopes of a possibly distant future, as valid tokens of goodwill towards us and as sufficient cause for wiping out their distrust of England.

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[1] Marginal comment on v. Richthofen's urgent report of July 20th. This report is given in *Grosse Politik*, xiv. 297, without the Kaiser's comments. The Kaiser to the Foreign Office, August 22nd (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 333).

[2] Treaties of August 30th, 1898 (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 347).

A few days after the conclusion of this treaty General Kitchener defeated the troops of the Khalifa at Omdurman (Sept. 3rd); and a few weeks later, at Fashoda, he came upon the leader of the French expedition, Major Marchand, who had already hoisted the tricolour. For a long time past the possibility of war between France and England in the Upper Valley of the Nile had been coming nearer. England had armed so as to be ready for any emergency. But the crisis passed over as is known. Difficulties in home affairs having brought about the resignation of the French Ministry, the new Foreign Minister, Delcassé, decided to yield to the English demands, to recall Marchand, and to renounce the claim for the confirmation of French rights to the Bahr-el-Ghazal territory.

Germany's fate also was affected by the Fashoda crisis. For had the war between France and England actually come about, or had the hostility that blazed up so keenly in the press of both countries remained as a definite factor in the general situation, the war of revenge would have lost all prospect of realisation within measurable time; for France, even with Russia's help, could not have fought Germany and England at the same time. There were those in France at that time who advocated a thorough understanding with Germany and regarded England as their natural enemy. The possibility of a Continental

League seemed to be coming nearer. During the following months the Kaiser left nothing undone to induce the French to follow this path; even in Russia an effort was made to induce M. Witte, Minister of Finance and the foremost champion of the continental policy, to use his influence with France for this end. The Kaiser lamented deeply to the Czar that France had withdrawn just when she might have rendered a great service to the general interest of all the other nations in Africa, more especially if it were true that Muravieff had advised this step.[1]

But Delcassé's decision, confirmed by the Ministry and the Chamber, brought France triumphantly through this difficult moment. By setting her teeth and suffering the humiliation at Fashoda, France was consciously making a great sacrifice so that she might not forfeit that final reckoning with Germany which was the inmost aim of every patriotic heart.

On the English side there was a strong inclination to take advantage of the situation by having a general clearing up with France. Chamberlain was the most zealous champion of this policy. He sent word to Berlin that if war came about he reckoned on Germany's benevolent neutrality; in Berlin they hoped that England would further heighten the tension by a formal declaration of her protectorate over Egypt, and they were already considering the compensations they meant to demand in return for their recognition of this suzerainty.[2] But things never got so far, because after France had given way in the Upper Valley of the Nile, England avoided chafing her already sorely wounded pride by any new steps that were not immediately necessary. Early in 1899 a fresh difficulty arose over the question of the protectorate over Muscat in Arabia; but here again France gave way. The treaty of March 21st, 1899, defining the spheres of influence in the Sudan, put an end to the acute conflict, but did not altogether remove the tension.

During all this time Chamberlain had never lost sight of his plan for an alliance with Germany, and in his speech at Wakefield on Dec. 8th he spoke even more plainly than he had done at Birmingham in May. There was no intention, he said, of expecting Germany to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for England, as many of them over there thought; England was quite able to defend her interests for herself. But she had so many interests in common with Germany, while there were no irreconcilable differences, and the maintenance of the peace of the world meant so much for both Powers, that it was to be hoped that these two, the greatest sea Power and the strongest military Power, would often go forward in future shoulder to shoulder. He considered the entente with Germany would not be the least of the successes achieved by the present Government. He evidently wished to prepare public opinion for a more definite connection and to induce them to consider it favourably.

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[1] The Kaiser to the Czar, November 9th, 1898; Goetz, 63.

[2] Richthofen to Bülow, November 8th; Bülow to the Foreign Office, November 9th, 1898. These letters are not given in the Foreign Office publications.

Undoubtedly since the spring Anglo-German relations had greatly improved; but the alliance as originally planned was not yet in existence. Just at the time when England made her offer, Germany, who had once ardently desired it, held aloof, did not respond to Chamberlain's eagerness. And when the last proposal brought forward by the English Ambassador met with a favourable response from the Kaiser, the English Government relapsed once more into silence.

At the first glance all this appears very strange. As a matter of fact, we do not know what reasons for England's offer had arisen since February. Nor did Bülow and Holstein know; the motives alleged by Chamberlain did not seem to them sufficient, and for that very reason they were suspicious. This sudden and unexpected change of policy seemed to them uncanny. Was the real reason, as the Kaiser supposed, the German naval laws, passed in March, which provided for the gradual increase of Germany's sea-power? It is quite possible that such calculations for the future may have contributed their share, but in the actual negotiations no reference was made by England to the development of the German naval armaments. Were they really wishing to incite Germany against Russia and then leave her in the lurch and profit by her sacrifices? There is no tangible evidence of such intentions. In Birmingham, Chamberlain had only said that without an ally England could not wage war against Russia with any prospect of success, not that she meant to wage war as soon as an ally was forthcoming. In the then state of the British Empire war would not have been desirable. They naturally wished to prevent any further encroachment by Russia in Eastern Asia. But if war had broken out over this question, after the last proposal of August, Germany would only have been bound to take part if France had entered the conflict on Russia's side. It is doubtful if we could have remained mere spectators in any case. Had the English Government in spring made overtures to Russia also and played a double game, or had it been merely feeling its way to an understanding as to the delimitation of the frontiers in Eastern Asia? It is possible that the Czar exaggerated this overture quite as much as the Kaiser exaggerated the English offer to Germany. Why had no official offer been made in August, as the Kaiser suggested? Was the alliance no longer thought necessary after the victory at Omdurman, after Fashoda, and the German promise to refrain from intervention on behalf of the Boers? Or had they learned in London of the Kaiser's communications to St. Petersburg and were they unwilling to expose themselves to fresh indiscretions? The last supposition is supported by subsequent remarks of Chamberlain's. These questions cannot be answered conclusively until England throws open her archives.

The reason for this reserve on the part of the German statesmen ought not to be lightly dismissed. They possibly carried their distrust too far when they believed that Germany would be sent into the struggle against Russia solely for English interests. Also they overestimated the danger of a Franco-Russian attack if the negotiations for an alliance became known and failed owing to the opposition in Parliament. But it was natural that they should be unwilling to risk landing themselves in dangerous opposition to Russia, or being called upon to help in the defence of the entire British Empire without securing equivalent services. It was natural that they should insist on the Parliamentary ratification of an alliance, for in the state of public opinion in England that could not be looked upon as too sure. One of the Liberal leaders, Sir Charles Dilke, had sharply criticised Chamberlain's plans in the House of Commons and had declared that Germany would never consent to defend India or British trade in China against Russia.[1] The English press had in any case shown little sympathy with the projected alliance. It was natural, also, that the Germans should not wish to be the first to formulate their demand in writing, when the other side only ventured on verbal statements. But what one does not understand is why Hatzfeldt was not allowed to make an attempt, in conversation with English statesmen, to get the proposed alliance formulated in detail, unofficially. In this way we should have found out more clearly just what the other side was prepared to ask and to offer. It is not quite clear whether an alliance was still really desired in Berlin even with reciprocity of liabilities. The thought that it might be more advantageous for Germany to stand unfettered between the two groups and play the part of arbiter of the world, or at least to wait and see if England would make better offers, proved too seductive. From every point of view it was unwise to communicate England's offer to Russia, and that too in a distorted form. It should have been treated as confidential and not discredited beforehand as insincere. All these questions crop up again later on, and in the account of the second attempt we shall be better able to estimate the significance and prospects of the suggested alliance.

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[1] Dilke's speech, June 10th, 1898 (*Hansard*, p. 1336).

## VI. SAMOA, THE BOER WAR, AND THE YANGTSE TREATY

While the attention of the great Powers was being concentrated on Africa and the Near East, an event of historic significance was being enacted in another theatre, the entry of the United States into the politics of the world.

In their struggle with Spain, which broke out in April, 1898, the Americans were not only victors in the Caribbean Sea, but they seized the Spanish colonial empire in the East Indies, and, acting in concert with Aguinaldo, the local leader, they overthrew the corrupt sovereignty of Spain in the Philippines. For the first time the United States had intervened actively in events outside America. In the course of the peace negotiations held through the mediation of France, America demanded the absolute surrender of the Philippines, and Spain was forced to consent. By stationing warships at Tientsin and a military guard at the American Embassy in Pekin, President Mackinley showed unmistakably that the United States regarded themselves as co-interested parties in Eastern Asia, and in his message of December 5th, 1898, he stated that fact plainly.

In Berlin there was a twofold interest in this development of affairs. Germany did not desire any large redistribution of power in Eastern Asia; but if Spain's eastern possessions were to be liquidated, she wanted a share of the spoil. At the beginning of the war there were repeated protests in America against the United States seizing territory in the East Indies. Indeed Admiral Dewey himself spoke to this effect.[1] Here, therefore, there was no immediate chance of colliding with American plans. A German cruiser squadron under Admiral von Diederichs was despatched to the Philippines with the primary object of protecting, if need be, the lives and property of Germans domiciled there. But there was certainly also the desire to have fighting forces on the spot in case an opportunity occurred for occupying territory. There was no thought of joining in the struggle in favour of either of the contending parties. Suggestions from various quarters for intervention had been rejected, and, moreover, the German naval forces in the East Indies would not have been adequate for such a purpose.

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[1] Count Leyden, May 5th, 1898; Naval Headquarters to the Foreign Office, June 17th.

In America the arrival of the German squadron was resented. They suspected designs for intervention and military occupation. As a matter of fact in Berlin it was thought that we could scarcely fail to capture at least one coaling-station in this part of the South Seas,[1] and great was the dismay when it became increasingly evident that the Americans intended to remain in the Philippines. Attempts were made to find out in London whether or not England would consent to the Philippines being neutralised. But Lord Salisbury showed no inclination to go into that question.[2] It was a fixed principle of English policy on no account to antagonise the United States. It was also learned from Madrid that Spain's one concern was to dispose of her possessions in this part of the world at as high a figure as possible, and there was the danger that France would use her good relations with Spain to get her own way in everything.[3]

Friction between the naval authorities, especially the fact that Admiral von Diederichs had received the Spanish Governor (who had requested his intervention) and negotiated with him, roused bad feeling in America, although the admiral had refused to intervene. The rapid development of events in the autumn caused Germany to refrain from any attempt at intermeddling owing to the uncertain aspect of the projected gains. The idea now favoured was to acquire by purchase the Marianne and the Caroline Islands further south, which also belonged to Spain;

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[1] Holleben, June 13th (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 40). Holstein to Hatzfeldt, August 6th. In this letter (not published in the Foreign Office Records) Holstein says, "Besides, as already said, a coaling-station is naturally expected as the result of our participation in the protection of the Philippines."

[2] Despatch to Hatzfeldt, August 5th. Hatzfeldt, August 9th (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 69, 71).

[3] Radowitz, August 8th. Despatch to Radowitz, August 12th (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 72, 73).

and this was done. Although Germany by her acts had given no just ground of offence, public opinion in America remained deeply suspicious, which was not without gravity for our relations with the new World Power in Eastern Asia. It also affected the attitude of the American representative in Samoa during the disorders there in the spring of 1899 caused by dissensions in the reigning family. The representatives of the three protecting Powers had at first agreed to the establishment of a provisional Government, but on March 11th this decision was altered, in spite of the protest of the German Consul, by the Consuls of the other two Powers. English and American warships bombarded Apia and landed troops. A German planter, who was supposed to have helped the natives, was taken prisoner and only after long negotiations handed over to the German cruiser lying in the bay. This led to sharp recriminations between the various Governments. The impossibility of maintaining the existing position had long been felt in Berlin. In August, 1898, after the death of King Malietoa, the German Government had suggested partitioning the group of islands. In Washington they had been quite willing, but London had rejected the proposal, although certain modifications and additions to the African treaty desired by Balfour had been offered in exchange. They declared that Australia regarded any increase of Germany's power in the South Seas so unfavourably that the Government could not act otherwise. Early in 1899 the situation in Samoa had grown more threatening. Bülow again brought up the matter in London. It was now proposed to surrender to England Germany's share of the co-partnership in exchange for the Gilbert Islands, the English portion of New Guinea and a coaling-station in Malacca. But Chamberlain thought the price much too high.[1] Before a settlement had been reached the disturbances and fighting already mentioned had broken out. Public opinion in Germany turned strongly against England, for the Americans were regarded merely as having been made use of. It was feared that Germany might be forcibly deprived of her rights of co-partnership in violation of the treaty of 1889. As general threats coupled with a change in the direction of our whole policy proved of no effect, Bülow requested the Kaiser's permission, in the event of the breach of the treaty actually taking place, not indeed to declare war against England, but to recall the German Ambassador from London " as international intercourse is aimless, where international treaties are not observed." To this the Kaiser gave his consent.[1] England's declaration that she stood by the earlier treaty until it was altered by the unanimous decision of the three interested Powers was not considered sufficient. On April 11th Germany demanded the sending of a Commission consisting of three representatives of the protecting Powers and one independent delegate who would decide in disputed points. If England rejected this suggestion, " his Imperial Majesty is resolved, in view of the unfriendly attitude of the English Government and of the hopelessness of further negotiations owing to this attitude, to break off diplomatic relations with England until such time as the English Government shall have shown its respect for treaties already concluded, as well as the consideration which is due to us." Count Hatzfeldt requested and received permission, before officially communicating this threat, which would naturally involve breaking off the negotiations, to try to come to an understanding indirectly with the English Ministers as to the serious consequences of persisting in this unfriendly attitude.[2] He did this through Lord Rothschild and through him he received the information from Chamberlain that Salisbury had decided to accept the German proposal for a Commission. He was of the opinion that but for the actual threat the Prime Minister would not have yielded. He advised waiting quietly to see if England was prepared to honour our friendship and act accordingly, or at least not to undertake any permanent obligations towards other Powers. To this the Kaiser consented, but declared that he could not go again to England so long as Lord Salisbury was in power.[3]

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[1] Bülow's note, January 21st, 1899. Despatches to Hatzfeldt, January 22nd and February 11th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv, 575).

Although the crisis had been tided over, the understanding as to the future fate of Samoa was making no progress. Also the Kaiser had taken a deep dislike to Lord Salisbury and gave unrestrained expression to it. He was offended also that he had not been invited to London for the eightieth anniversary of his grandmother's birthday (May 24th, 1899) but merely for a visit to Cowes in the autumn. He made it the occasion for writing Queen Victoria a letter of bitter complaint. After the many signs of friendship which he had given England and lately his strict abstention from interference in the Fashoda crisis, Salisbury's conduct in the Samoan question was incomprehensible. It transgressed the most elementary rules of international courtesy. The Premier seemed to rank Germany on the same level with Portugal and Patagonia. Such insulting treatment neither he nor the German nation could allow. The English Government must learn to treat them on a footing of equality. In the present state of public opinion in Germany he would scarcely be able to come to Cowes. The aged Queen, deeply hurt, replied that such accusations were unheard-of and undeserved. She had immediately informed Lord Salisbury and he emphatically denied any unfriendly act or intention. He wrote an exhaustive memorandum justifying his procedure which Queen Victoria sent to her grandson. Salisbury also sent word to the Kaiser through Hatzfeldt that he would like a personal interview, and hoped for this reason that the Kaiser would come to England; nothing was further from his mind than to pursue a policy hostile to Germany's just interests. As a proof of his goodwill he consented to the dismissal of the American chief judge Chambers, who had played an outstanding part in the Samoan disputes, and to the choice of the King of Sweden as arbitrator in all questions concerning compensation.[1]

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[1] Hatzfeldt, March 25th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 585). Bülow to the Foreign Office, March 29th. Bülow's despatch of April 1st, with marginal comments by the Kaiser (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 590).

[2] Hatzfeldt, April 12th. Despatch to Hatzfeldt, April 12th.

[3] Private letter from Hatzfeldt to Holstein with marginal comment by the Kaiser (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 606).

The discussions as to the future of Samoa were now resumed. Chamberlain and von Eckardstein, the legal adviser to the Embassy, agreed to a compromise by which Germany renounced her share in the group of islands in exchange for compensations in the South Seas and Africa.[2] We were to receive the delta of the Volta river, so important for the development of Togoland. In Berlin the majority of the Colonial Council was in favour of this solution, but it found a determined opponent in Admiral von Tirpitz, who, in the previous year, had become head of the Imperial Navy Department. He emphasised the strategic importance of the Samoan Islands, especially after the opening of the Panama Canal, and also their value as the station for a world-wide cable service for Germany. If we ceded our rights we must demand much higher compensation, either Zanzibar and Walfish Bay, or at least, in addition to the latter, a considerable portion of England's possessions in the South Seas. If we could not get that and could not retain Samoa, it would be better to lodge a formal estimate of our rights and to renounce any compensation, so that when a more favourable opportunity occurred we might renew our claim for Samoa.[1] Although the head of the Imperial Postal Service declared that Samoa was out of the question as a station for a cable, the Kaiser insisted on the point of view that in consideration of the sentimental value attached to it as the earliest object of our overseas activity, the renunciation of Samoa must not be thought of. He also declared that he did not wish to go to England if this situation was not cleared up in a satisfactory manner.[2] Owing to the increasing probability of a Boer War, this visit would be of substantial political value to England as a sign that this time, in contrast to his previous attitude, the Kaiser stood on Britain's side, a circumstance which he meant to use in bringing pressure to bear on the English Government.

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[1] The Kaiser to Queen Victoria, May 22nd, The Queen's reply, June 12th; Bülow to the Kaiser, July 13th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 615, 620, 623).

[2] *Vide* Eckardstein's *Lebenserinnerungen*, ii. 33.

Chamberlain, who had frankly preferred the solution arrived at previously, declared with some petulance that he would offer no direct obstacles to the exchange of the English share of Samoa for equivalent compensation, but that he himself would not negotiate on that basis; the negotiations must be conducted by Lord Salisbury. Bülow sent word to Hatzfeldt that co-operation with England in matters of world policy was only possible if Samoa were ceded to us; and he was to try and obtain something on this basis.[3]

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[1] Memorandum of Tirpitz, October 11th, 1899 (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 660).

[2] Despatch to Hatzfeldt, October 13th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 662).

[3] Hatzfeldt, October 9th, 10th and 12th. Note from Hatzfeldt, October 18th.

England eventually gave way; just at that time the threatening outbreak of the Boer War made the friendship of Germany especially desirable. Hatzfeldt took advantage of this feeling in London to indicate again that Berlin would be willing, after a settlement of this question, such as she desired, to agree more readily to English wishes in the matter of a general political understanding. The Samoa question alone, as he once remarked, stood in the way of confidential relations.[1]

After long haggling, on November 14th, 1899, the treaty was at last concluded and England renounced her rights in Samoa. The United States received the island of Tutuila, Germany Upolu and Sawai; while England got in exchange the Tonga Islands and the larger part of the Solomon group, a rectification of the boundary of the Togo hinterland, and the renunciation by Germany of her extra-territorial rights in Zanzibar. Another treaty (October 28th) secured the construction of the great telegraph line from the Cape to Cairo through German East Africa, as well as the building of a future railway line, thereby averting the danger that threatened in 1894 of the railway passing outside German territory.

All these agreements on isolated points represented stages in a return to the harmonious relations of previous years between Germany and England. But it was highly significant that the negotiations over these comparatively minor matters should nearly have caused a breach in their diplomatic relations. The way in which German policy invariably opened fire at once with its biggest guns was extremely antipathetic to English statesmen, who were more tranquil and tolerant in their diplomatic intercourse and very sensitive to threats.

While these negotiations were in progress, the first Peace Congress took place at the Hague. The invitation had proceeded from the Czar, who in the previous August had invited all the nations of the world so far as they had representatives in St. Petersburg to a Conference for the purpose of restricting military armaments. This step, which came as a great surprise, roused a general feeling of bewilderment and distrust. People wondered what the Czar was really intending and if purely Russian schemes were not at the back of it. In Berlin there was a feeling that the true author of the idea was the Finance Minister, Witte, who was sorely puzzled to find the large sums of money necessary for the development of the Russian army and the completion of the strategic railways, while the Czar had been won over by the appeal to his humanitarian instincts and his vanity. From the very outset it was thought in Berlin that nothing would come of it, but as the Czar himself had come forward so prominently in the matter, a direct refusal was out of the question. In other countries, especially in England, America and Italy, the Governments were equally sceptical, but there public opinion cordially welcomed the idea of restricting the armaments fever by means of international agreements and reducing the risk of future wars. Hence all the States from various motives agreed to the Russian proposal, and on May 18th, 1899, the Conference met at the Hague.

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[1] Hatzfeldt, September 30th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 647).

Germany was represented by her Ambassador in Paris, Count Münster, assisted by legal and military experts. They were to aim at obtaining some harmless agreement which would prevent the Czar's effort being a complete failure, but were to be careful not to decide upon anything that would fetter the freedom of movement of German policy. They were to keep on close terms with the Russian representatives, and support their measures as far as possible, but, when necessary, to add reservations and emendations of the text so as to rob it of any unfavourable tendencies. Otherwise they were to keep in the background and leave others to oppose impossible demands, so that Germany could not be reproached for having hindered by her conduct a great humanitarian work.

Our representatives were not able to carry through this rôle. When the Russians proposed, in the sub-committee on the limitation of armaments, that the present effective strength of all armies should remain unchanged for five years and any increase during that time be prohibited, the German military representative declared it impossible in general and particularly for Germany to accept this proposal, and so it ended in a general statement to the effect that a limitation of armaments was desirable in future.

Great difficulties were caused by the wish of the English representative, Lord Pauncefote, to extend the Russian proposal for the formation of a court for the settlement of international disputes into a permanent international tribunal and to make the appeal to it in certain cases obligatory. There was great indignation in Berlin. There they rightly distrusted the impartiality of such a tribunal, and would not consent to it even if its activities were restricted to minor matters not affecting the honour or status of the participating States. At Holstein's instigation the delegates were instructed to hold aloof from this attempt, even although the other States decided in its favour. The delegates protested that such an attitude would break up the Conference and leave the blame for this entirely with Germany. Count Münster added the further warning that such proceedings would have a prejudicial effect on our whole relationship with Russia. After Bülow had verified the accuracy of this view by consulting the German Ambassador in Russia, he persuaded the Kaiser, who at heart considered the whole Conference a mere farce, to follow a different course. The German representatives were now to consent to the establishment of a permanent Court of Justice on the stipulation that it lay with the individual States whether or not they would have recourse to it in any case of dispute. Most of the other States wished to go further, or at least made a pretence of doing so, but yielded in order to make the resolution unanimous. In this diluted form the English proposal was finally accepted together with some other decisions regarding the principles of the Geneva Convention concerning naval warfare and the conduct of war on land. On the 25th June the Conference ended with this somewhat meagre result. "A net with large holes" in which you might get entangled, was how Count Münster described the regulations governing the tribunal. The Kaiser declared he had consented to the farce for the sake of the Czar, but in practice he would rely entirely on God and his sharp sword.

In reviewing these proceedings there is no doubt that the Governments of all the Great Powers found the Czar's proposals extremely troublesome, while the smaller states welcomed them joyfully. Nevertheless the majority of the Great Powers had to take into consideration the pacific tendencies in their own countries, and were therefore very cautious in their attitude. German statesmen were differently placed, because in Germany there were few adherents of these ideas, and the opinion of the outside world seemed to them a very secondary matter. But for the Czar their opposition would have been much more vigorous. So the other Powers were relieved of the unpleasant task of thwarting the proposals in decisive matters or watering them down in amendments. By patience and self-restraint it might have been possible to leave other States to take the initiative as originally intended, and so to have spared Germany this odium. Germany now stood forth to many as the strongest opponent of any amelioration of the burdens of war, and roused in her enemies the suspicion, although falsely, that she was harbouring military aspirations.[1]

These proceedings had no effect on the general situation as regards Germany and the Great Powers. On the one hand, Germany sought to maintain good relations with Russia, and improve those with France; on the other, to foster the hope in England that she still wished for an alliance; but to commit herself to no binding agreement with anyone.

Russia took advantage of the tension in the spring between Germany and England over the Samoan question to draw Germany over to her side. Witte, the Russian Minister of Finance, said to the German Ambassador that an understanding between Germany, Russia and France would be the surest guarantee for the peace of the world; it would make great armaments superfluous and allow the Continental Powers to use their means for the building of stronger navies so as to hold English supremacy in the world in check. England always gave way whenever you showed your teeth. She would then modify her demands and good relations would be possible. Baron von Osten-Sacken spoke in the same strain to Bülow at Berlin. Acting in concert they had scored a small success over England on the question of retaining international Courts of Justice in Egypt, and there were other matters, the Ambassador believed, in which they might co-operate advantageously. Similar overtures came from Spain, who would gladly have joined in some such Continental League. They believed there that the granting of a stronger form of autonomy in Alsace-

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[1] *Vide* the documents relating to Germany's attitude at the Hague Conference in *Grosse Politik*, xv. 139-364.

Lorraine within the Imperial Union would keep the French contented.[1]

The Kaiser and Bülow remained sceptical. The Kaiser raised the question whether an alliance of England, America and Japan might not be more effective for the peace of the world. He said that they had repeatedly advocated a Continental League with the Czar, but had never seen any sign of a desire to co-operate. Bülow doubted France's willingness for permanent co-operation ; that time might perhaps come, but there was no sign of it yet. He left it to Hatzfeldt to judge whether he could make use in London of the Russian overtures in the Samoan negotiations.[2] These overtures Germany did not reject. She expressed her agreement with the fundamental idea and sought to get into touch with the French. She even gave them excellent advice in the event of a war with England. But when in July Russia proposed concluding a new Re-insurance Treaty she drew back, convinced that her course was to pursue a policy in common with Russia as long as possible, but not to be dependent on her.[3]

Somewhat later the Russians brought forward more definite wishes. They had watched, not without anxiety, the Kaiser's trip to the East in the autumn of 1898. That he had proclaimed himself at Damascus the friend of the Sultan and of 300,000,000 Mohammedans had made them uneasy. The Czar found little comfort in the Kaiser's description of an alliance with Islam as the best way of making trouble for England in India. The Russians were especially annoyed at the concessions granted by the Sultan, through the Kaiser's efforts, to the German Anatolian Railway Company for the construction of a harbour at Haidar-Pasha; and they probably were also aware that negotiations were already in progress for continuing the railway through Bagdad down to the Persian Gulf, the concession being granted in November, 1899. Muravieff told Prince Radolin that no other Power could be allowed a commanding position on the Bosphorus and that they did not wish the economic position of the Turkish Empire strengthened by the projected railway line and the Sultan's military power increased. Russia could only agree to Germany's economic penetration of Asia Minor if we were prepared to recognise her exclusive claims to the Bosphorus in unambiguous fashion and consented to influence the other Powers in this direction. If Germany was not willing Russia must then come to an understanding with England, who at present was less interested in the question of the Straits and might safely be left to control the Persian Gulf. In vain the German Ambassador represented to him that it was much less dangerous for Russia to have Germany in Asia Minor than England; besides, the Kaiser had already pledged his word to the Czar that he would not interfere with Russia's Straits policy and therefore no written agreement was necessary. So long as we had to reckon on France's unrelenting hostility, and so long as the Continental League did not materialise, we could not make new enemies and dared not risk a breach with England. Muravieff thought that the agreement could be kept absolutely secret, and if it should become known, England, in the end, was sure to come to terms.[1]

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[1] Radolin, April 2nd, 1899 (*Grosse Politik*, xiii. 209). Despatch to Hatzfeldt, April 10th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 600). Radowitz, April 15th and August 12th, 1899 (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 115 and 127).

[2] Bülow to Radowitz, April 27th, to Hatzfeldt, April 10th. The Kaiser's remarks on Radolin's dispatch of April 2nd (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 119 and xiii. 209).

[3] Tchirschky's comment on a conversation with Osten-Sacken, July 3rd (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 556).

The choice was, either a definite understanding as to the Straits, or more or less veiled opposition from Russia to our economic and political influence in Turkey. In declining this agreement, Germany was actuated not merely by considerations as to England but quite as strongly by the wish not to enter into open conflict with Austria's Eastern policy. As Germany would not give a binding declaration, Russia now drew closer to France. By his adroitness, Delcassé, who went in person to St. Petersburg at the end of July, succeeded in getting a definite renewal of the agreements of 1891 and 1893, the aim of which was described as the preservation of peace and the maintenance of the balance of power. It was also arranged that the military convention was not to be cancelled on the dissolution of the Triple Alliance, but was to continue to exist so long as the more general friendly treaty remained in force. Delcassé had thus arranged, as he himself declared, that Russia should not have quite a free hand if, after the death of the Emperor Francis Joseph, the

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[1] Radolin, June 29th, 1899 (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 549).

Danube Monarchy broke up and the Triple Alliance ceased to exist. For this very reason further co-operation against German expansion was especially necessary.[1] It is therefore scarcely surprising that on the Czar's visit to Potsdam on November 8th, 1899, nothing happened beyond an exchange of mutual assurances of goodwill. The Czar again begged Germany to avoid the appearance of trying to supplant Russia's traditional influence in the East. Muravieff added that Germany should not construct railways of strategic importance there, without a previous understanding with Russia.

Both the meeting of the two Emperors at Potsdam and the conclusion of the Samoan Treaty were influenced by the shadow of the great coming event of the following year, the war between England and the Boer Republic, which broke out in 1899. In England it was a question of establishing definitely the security of her power in South Africa and of the sea route by the Cape of Good Hope. The war originated in the short-sighted and egotistical policy of the Boers towards immigrants who had developed their industrial regions and had brought them material advantages previously undreamt of.

The English preparations were far from complete when the Boers launched their ultimatum, and in the early stages of the war they inflicted such severe defeats that many thought the British Empire had been shaken to its foundations. England was obliged to concentrate all her forces on the struggle and to avoid superfluous friction. The conclusion of the Samoan Treaty with Germany was probably influenced by this change of circumstances. All over the continent, but especially in Germany, public opinion was strongly in favour of the Boers and against the English. Men delighted in depicting the war as a British campaign of robbery against the gold and diamond fields of the Transvaal, as the oppression of a small, free and harmless people by brutal Albion. The Kaiser's previous incursion made it extraordinarily difficult for the Government to oppose this point of view, although they had in the interval allowed England a free hand in South Africa. This time, however, there was no longer any thought at Berlin of intervening on behalf of the Boers, who were frankly informed of the fact, while the authorities in London were left in no doubt as to our benevolent neutrality. Indeed, when the Kaiser, at the outbreak of hostilities, acted on his grandmother's invitation earlier in the year, and came to England, his presence there was regarded throughout the country as a mark of sympathy for the nation in their sore struggle. It was looked upon as a sort of expiation for the Kruger telegram, and Court, people, and press received the Kaiser with the greatest cordiality. His presence was all the more welcome as the tone of the German press had given great offence and warnings had come from Russia that Germany was seeking to bring about united intervention by all the Continental Powers.

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[1] *Vide* the French Yellow Book, *L'Alliance franco-russe*, p. 200.

The idea of this sort of intermeddling seems indeed to have originated with France. During the conversations at Potsdam, the Russians had said they had no intention of intervening, although the war would cost England great sacrifices, for she had proved less strong both on land and sea than was generally thought. On the other hand, the French Ambassador had vainly tried at the end of October to find out how Germany stood with regard to England in the South African, the Near Eastern and the Far Eastern questions.[1] Soon afterwards the French Government sought to turn to account a report from the Ambassador, in which mention was made of a casual remark of Bülow's as to the identity of German and French interests in South Africa, in order to make inquiries in Berlin as to whether Germany intended to make definite proposals to safeguard these interests. The reply of the Secretary of State was absolutely non-committal. The Ambassador, however, before further instructions had reached him from Paris, had on his own initiative seized the opportunity of an interview with the Kaiser to suggest joint precautionary measures against English expansion in Africa. The Kaiser told him this was absolutely useless ; four years earlier it might have been possible, but at that time France and Russia had treated him with scorn. Now he could not abandon his strict neutrality until he had a strong fleet, which would not be the case for twenty years.[2] Later they tried in Paris to produce the impression on Prince Münster that

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[1] Note by Derenthall on a conversation with the Duc de Noailles, October 25th.

[2] The Kaiser to Bülow, October 29th ; Cp. also the very one-sided account of the interview in the French report, 293 f.

France was only waiting for a pretext to join with England.[1] The Ambassador does not seem to have realised that the real purpose of these remarks was to tempt Germany into indiscretions.

The Kaiser's visit to England lasted from the 20th till the 28th November. Bülow accompanied him and drew up an exhaustive account of the political conversations at Windsor. The Kaiser received Chamberlain twice, on November 21st and again on the 24th, and heard from his own lips his plan for the alliance, including America. Chamberlain emphasised the fact of England's traditional aversion from formal alliances and of Germany's inevitable consideration for Russia, and thought we ought to proceed along the fruitful path of agreements on isolated matters. In this connection Chamberlain suggested the investment of English capital in the Bagdad railway and an agreement as to Morocco, whereby Tangier might fall to England and part of the Atlantic coast to Germany. The Kaiser replied that all this could be further considered confidentially. Possibly under the influence of his interview with Chamberlain he was once more inclined in favour of an English alliance. But his diplomatists were unwearying in reminding him that Germany's best policy was to hold back and to wait. Hatzfeldt said to the Kaiser at this time, no doubt with Bülow's sanction, "that the decision of all great European questions would lie in the Kaiser's hands provided we could wait for the right moment."[2]

Balfour also had a conversation with the Kaiser and Bülow, and laid special emphasis on the fact that in economic competition he saw no ground for political hostility and that there was no objection to Germany's activity in Asia Minor; finally he brought up the question of the future of Austria-Hungary. He asked if the German Empire would not take the Cis-Leithian territories if the Danube Monarchy broke up? Bülow replied that Germany had no interest in that, but that he was appalled at the prospect that all the Slav portions of the Hapsburg Monarchy and all the Balkans might fall into Russia's hands. The English Minister admitted the seriousness of such a prospect.

The most important of the interviews was that between Bülow and Chamberlain on November 24th, in which the latter unfolded his ideas anew. Russia must not become more powerful in Asia. China, Persia and Turkey must be maintained as long as possible; that was to the common interest of Germany and England. Good relations with America were vital; England, at least, would never do anything to injure her. France was a country going down-hill. A good understanding with Germany was rendered difficult by the unreasonable attitude of the press. Bülow held that there were many old scores also against the English press. He encouraged Chamberlain, though he does not say so in his report, to air his views unreservedly in public in order to find out how far they met with popular acceptance. The further increase in the German navy already planned was not relished by the English Minister, who, nevertheless, raised no serious protest. He repeatedly showed that Lord Salisbury, although in principle not opposed to a closer understanding with Germany, was somewhat sceptical of his plans.

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[1] Münster, December 22nd, 1899 (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 430).

[2] Hatzfeldt to Bülow, December 24th (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 432).

A new and striking feature of these deliberations was the inclusion of America, which had scarcely been thought of in the previous spring. But for a year past the United States had taken her place as one of the directing Powers in Eastern Asia and the South Seas.

From these conversations Bülow gathered the impression that Chamberlain was clear-sighted, matter-of-fact and upright, but a typical business man; also that public opinion in England was less hostile to Germany than German public opinion was to England. As a result of these interviews he summed up the leading features of Germany's future policy as follows: "I consider the future task of the German Government is to await the further development of events patiently and calmly, confident in the possession of a stronger fleet and careful to preserve good relations with Russia as well as England." The intention was to go on just as before.

In London this exchange of views had roused great hopes. Chamberlain believed he was sure of agreement with Bülow in cardinal points. Following the overture of the German statesman he took the opportunity of a speech at Leicester on November 29th to develop his programme of an alliance or at least an understanding with Germany and America. He spoke of the Triple Alliance of the Germanic peoples, and of the two branches of the Anglo-Saxon race, but regretted that the attitude of the German press rendered good relations difficult. These words were received somewhat sceptically in England but in Germany with downright hostility, so much so that Bülow, in his speech in the Reichstag on the naval laws of December 11th, felt it necessary to speak with marked coldness of our relations with England though profuse in his courtesies towards France and Russia. He indicated, indeed, that England's temporary embarrassments ought to be turned to account by obtaining securities for the future. In these remarks, the tactical aim—making a good atmosphere for the naval proposals—comes out strongly. Bülow took the trouble to let Chamberlain know privately that this was merely tactics; that his desire for an understanding remained as before. But we can understand how little the English Minister can have liked the Imperial Chancellor's proceeding, all the more so as he himself had acted on the latter's advice and had publicly announced the offer of an alliance. Once again we were too astute. Even Hatzfeldt thought it would be advantageous to let Chamberlain commit himself as much as possible without our tying our hands. He would then be inclined to offer us colonial concessions to induce us to put aside our reserve.[1] Were we not thereby pursuing the very policy we were constantly ascribing to England and for which we reproached her?

Since November the situation had already become less favourable, and in January of 1900, the seizure by the English of a German liner on its way to South Africa, on the pretext that it carried contraband of war, roused a storm of protest in Germany. Strong representations were made in London, and not only was the release of the steamer demanded, but also guarantees against the repetition of such an incident. The tone of the German demands amounted often to threatening, which deeply offended Lord Salisbury. He remarked soon afterwards that he had felt that English honour had been insulted when England found herself in a difficult position.[2] As a matter of fact the German Government was absolutely in the right. The steamer had not been carrying contraband and the other nations had never consented to grant England the right of search of neutral vessels when they were not attempting to break through an effective blockade. Naturally enough Tirpitz's followers in the press eagerly seized on the incident to convince public opinion in Germany of the ruthlessness with which England exercised her supremacy at sea and to show convincingly the necessity for the new naval proposals which had been under consideration for months past. Indeed, it was even said that England wished to offset her defeats on land in South Africa by victories at sea against Germany. Some of the Kaiser's wild comments on the situation found their way through to London; but there was no actual threat of war from Germany, and it is highly doubtful if there was ever any serious intention of sending a German admiral with an ultimatum, as was rumoured in London at the time.

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[1] Hatzfeldt, December 2nd, 1899 (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 422).

[2] Despatches to Hatzfeldt, January 11th, 14th, 15th, 1900. English note of January 14th. Holstein to Eckardstein, January 14th, and the latter's reply, January 15th (Eckardstein, ii. 146, 148). Hatzfeldt, January 16th (*Grosse Politik*, xiv. 463-475). Salisbury's remark in a report of Metternich, March 24th, 1900 (*Grosse Politik*, xiv 493).

Without renouncing her own point of view, which differed from that of Germany, England set the German liner at liberty, handed over the question of compensation to a court of justice, and undertook not to hold up ships at a distance from the theatre of war and not to molest mail ships on mere suspicion. The German Government expressed its satisfaction with this arrangement and the incident was closed. But it left behind it a certain lack of cordiality. Lord Salisbury, who had never believed in any practical outcome of Chamberlain's method, said to the German Ambassador at the end of February, that he wished for a strong Germany, but it was not wise to be always talking about an alliance. "The old English policy of not meddling in the lesser affairs of the Continent still held good. To this attitude it would be well to add that England, in case of need, will place herself on the side of the Power whose interests agree with English interests." [1]

This soreness did not disappear entirely even when the Kaiser told the English Ambassador that he would regard any diminution of England's power in consequence of the events in South Africa as an injury to German interests too, and wrote to the same effect to the Prince of Wales. He also assured the

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[1] Metternich, February 28th (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 515).

Austrian Ambassador that he had never worked against a settlement of Anglo-Russian differences, "for the interests of the German Empire and the wishes of the German Emperor require not a world-war but the maintenance of the world's peace." [1] This latter remark was immediately repeated in England. It was undoubtedly the Kaiser's real meaning and the policy of the German Government. Although the Kaiser often described English policy to the Czar as perfidious and dangerous to all others, he did not do so to drive him to war but only to deter him from joining with England, which would have meant the end of Germany's advantageous position as arbiter between the two groups and under certain circumstances might have constituted a serious danger. But as such statements generally reached London in a more or less distorted form, by all sorts of devious routes, especially via Copenhagen, their effect was only to reawaken the distrust of Germany.[2]

On the other hand, St. Petersburg was seeking to stir up Germany against England. Osten-Sacken had already in January suggested a coalition against England, on account of her violation of rights at sea. The Kaiser, however, emphatically rejected any attempt to lure him from his neutral attitude. When asked how he would deal with Russia if she attacked England in Persia or Afghanistan he replied "that he had as little intention of playing sentry for the Dual Alliance in East Africa as for England in Asia"; when asked what Germany would do if England occupied Delagoa Bay, he did not reply.[3] On March 3rd, 1900, Russia suddenly took a decisive step. With the consent of the French Government and in their name and his own, the Czar proposed in Berlin a united intervention of the three Powers between England and the Boer State. Count Muravieff called attention to the universal sympathy for the Boers in their fight for liberty and the principles of humanity. Now that England's honour had been upheld by the relief of Kimberley and the capture of Cronje at Paardeberg, such a step could not be felt as a slight by England. Bülow replied that he respected the Czar's lofty motives, but that as it was he who had taken the lead in summoning the Peace Conference at the Hague, it would be best if in this matter he alone took the initiative and found out if such action would be favourably received in London. Germany must avoid all complications so long as she was uncertain of France's attitude. "This security can only be reached by a settlement in which the contracting Powers mutually guarantee their European status for a long term of years."[1]

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[1] Note to Eulenburg, January 31st; Lichnowsky, January 31st (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 515); the Kaiser to the Prince of Wales, February 23rd.

[2] Cf. Prince Radolin's despatch of February 5th, 1900 (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 513).

[3] Bülow's report of a conversation between the Kaiser and Osten-Sacken, January 13th, 1900 (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 509).

As this would practically have meant a written renunciation of the idea of revenge, no French Government would have considered it. Muravieff protested that matters of this kind would require a conference which would last a long time, whereas here instant action was necessary. He told the German Ambassador direct that any French Ministry that entertained such a proposal would at once be turned out of office; France would never give up her claim to Alsace-Lorraine; and the probability was that at a congress the Schleswig and Bosnian questions would also come up for discussion.[2] So there was no intervention after all.

From St. Petersburg a more or less distorted version of these proceedings was sent to London. The initiative was said to have come from the Kaiser, who had suggested the idea of intervention to the Russian Ambassador; this statement was denied by Germany with the utmost vigour. Germany was declared to have been ready to agree in principle to the proposal, and to have demanded quite disgracefully high compensation in return; to this Bülow replied that for any further negotiations he had attached conditions so impossible of fulfilment as to leave no one in doubt that it was simply a polite form of refusal. In 1895, when they really wanted to co-operate with France and Russia, no such conditions had been imposed.[3]

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[1] Bülow's notes on the Russian communication, March 3rd. Despatch to Radolin, March 3rd (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 516).

[2] Radolin, March 5th and 11th (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 519, 527).

[3] Metternich, March 28th. Despatch to Metternich, March 31st (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 539, 540). This despatch was not issued in this form, but it undoubtedly gives the clearest definition of the point of view from which Bülow wished the matter to be considered.

Viewed in the light of current events, the only explanation of this episode seems to be that France and Russia had all along aimed at entangling Germany in such a way as would have brought about a permanent estrangement from England. The occasional anti-English outbursts of the Kaiser certainly helped to feed their hopes of success. Furthermore, it is significant that in dealing with the German Government the Russians never mentioned the Kaiser having taken the initiative, but said that the proposal had been made by them entirely out of consideration for the feeling in their own country.[1] The German answer was necessarily a refusal, but at the same time it again showed to the Russians and the French the only price which would ensure a permanent co-operation between Germany and the two Powers. As we have already seen, the German Government wished to retain their neutral position until one or other of the rival Powers offered tangible advantages. The thought of a continental league implying the French renunciation of Alsace-Lorraine was like a will-o'-the-wisp luring them on into the bog of a double-dealing policy. Security in their European status, inviolability on land, and the prospect of a colonial policy no longer fettered by consideration of England, all seemed attainable along this path. Neither Bülow nor the Kaiser considered the moment ripe yet for such a league. Again rumours were coming in from Rome, Vienna and Madrid that Muravieff was opposed to any reconciliation between France and Germany and had worked against it during his visit to Paris; that France was endeavouring to keep England and Germany apart, and that at the critical moment she herself would swerve over to the English side; for on the Seine they were still thirsting for military revenge, and would never rest content with colonial compensations at England's expense.[2] The experiences of 1896 and 1898 confirmed the justice of this view. But Germany wanted the possibility of a league not to be lost sight of and the participators to keep it in mind, hence the reply was formulated so as to indicate a conditional acceptance, and of course was interpreted as such by our enemies.

In English Government circles no one seriously believed that

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[1] Bülow's comment on a note from Osten-Sacken, March 30th.

[2] Eulenburg, February 15th, 1900 (*Grosse Politik*, xviii. 764).

Germany wanted to fight for the Boers. The Prince of Wales expressed his thanks to his nephew for his friendly attitude, but London did not exactly endorse Bülow's idea that Germany had rendered England at a critical moment a service of historical significance.[1]

Soon after these Russian overtures the Boers themselves begged for the intervention of Germany and the other Powers. On the German Government replying that this would only be possible if the Boers previously ascertained in London that such intervention would be acceptable, she received the answer that Britain would unhesitatingly reject any intervention.[2] Later on when a deputation under President Kruger came to Europe to seek help from the Powers, the Kaiser, as is well known, did not receive him.

A small but significant episode in the early months of the Boer War was the Kaiser's famous advice to the Prince of Wales as to the conduct of the war. It was sent at the beginning of February when things were still going hard with the English and before Lord Roberts had taken over the command. It consisted of several pages of aphoristic comments, without giving any definite detailed counsels. The summing up was somewhat striking. The campaign, the Kaiser declared, if conducted on sound military lines, would require a fairly long time. If England were not certain whether she would be secure from interference from foreign Powers for a considerable time, and therefore whether she would have free elbow-room for the necessary military measures, it would be better to bring matters to a conclusion. " Even the strongest football club when beaten, in spite of the bravest defence, ultimately accepts its defeats with equanimity."

The obvious implication was that England should accept her defeats in South Africa so as to avoid other dangers. That such language would give deep offence to the Prince of Wales, who was not at that time on good terms with his nephew, the Kaiser's advisers ought to have foreseen. The Prince replied that he failed to grasp the comparison of this war for England's position in the world, entailing great sacrifices, with a club football match; in any case the British Empire was making every effort to bring the struggle to a victorious conclusion.[1] This is a genuine instance of those irresponsible actions of the Kaiser which, however little influence they exerted in individual cases on the march of events, roused so much ill-feeling in other nations and their leaders against himself and German policy.

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[1] Metternich, March 5th. Despatch to Metternich, March 28th (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 518).

[2] Note from the Transvaal Government of March 10th. Bülow's answer, March 10th. The Kaiser to Bülow, March 10th (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 524, 525).

The incidents during the Boer War and the publication of the sharp German note in the English Blue Book, had impaired the feeling on both sides. Lord Salisbury, as before, looked coldly on the idea of a German-English alliance. He believed that in the event of an international conflict Germany would rather join with her powerful neighbour across the frontier than with England, but that she kept holding out to England the prospect of an alliance as a means of demanding colonial or other concessions. In spite of all, Chamberlain still obstinately clung to this idea. In March he told Count Wolff-Metternich, then temporarily acting as Ambassador in London during Hatzfeldt's illness, that he would never give it up all his life long, no matter what the obstacles. He was certainly thinking, he said, of a general understanding as to the treatment of important political questions rather than of a definitely formulated treaty; the actual phrasing did not trouble him, he was not a polished diplomat. Controversial exchanges, such as they had had recently, must be resolutely avoided. Much more serious matters had been negotiated with France in a quiet and courteous manner. Metternich regretted that the German Government had not altered their attitude; allowance must be made for the excited state of public opinion. England ought to judge Germany's policy not by words but by deeds, and not to forget that Germany had prevented the continental league. He found Chamberlain very sensitive and he advised his Government to act warily.[2]

Bülow also wished the negotiations not to be allowed to drop. He wished to postpone the idea of an alliance till public opinion generally had improved, and until England had realised that, with her weakness on land so clearly brought out in the Boer War and with her international difficulties, she required Germany's help and must make concessions to secure it. He then suggested a further special understanding regarding Morocco.[1] But nothing came of it.

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[1] The Kaiser to the Prince of Wales, February 4th. The Prince's reply, February 8th (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 553, 558).

[2] Metternich, March 19th, 1900 (*Grosse Politik*, xv. 484).

Morocco had already been the subject of many Anglo-German discussions. In February, 1899, Salisbury had declared that in the event of a collapse in Morocco, England would claim the Atlantic seaboard, and when Hatzfeldt indicated that Germany also expected a share he was not unwilling.[2] Later on Chamberlain suggested handing over a portion of the coast direct to Germany, but more detailed negotiations were postponed until the Samoa question had been settled.[3] On the Kaiser's visit to Windsor in November, 1899, Chamberlain himself explained this plan to the Kaiser and received a general consent to further discussions on this basis. France's occupation of the Tuat oasis led Bülow to point out in Paris in the following spring that we were interested in the fate of this "nerve centre of the terrestrial body," whereupon he received a reassuring reply. Hatzfeldt then advised us to come to a settlement with England at once, before France and England had divided the territory between them, as we could then do nothing.[4] Bülow realised the seriousness of that possibility. He felt a general war might ensue, which we did not want, and the consequences of which on our general policy might be incalculable. He empowered Hatzfeldt to negotiate with Chamberlain on the basis of the line of thought previously indicated by the English Minister. The latter expressed his willingness and requested definitely formulated proposals from Germany. But Hatzfeldt thought it wise to leave the initiative to England. As nothing came of that, however, Hatzfeldt then proposed that Germany should boldly announce her claim to the southern part of the Atlantic seaboard. But in Berlin they thought it more prudent to send warning counsels to Paris via St. Petersburg, in order to restrain France from aggressive action in Tuat and to prevent the opening up of the whole question.[1] As France took no immediate steps, there was a lull in the negotiations; for England had no interest in bringing up the subject, and was unwilling during the Boer War to add to her own anxieties.

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[1] Despatch to Hatzfeldt, May 23rd, 1900 (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 308).

[2] Hatzfeldt, February 8th, 1899 (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 295).

[3] Hatzfeldt, November 3rd, 1899 (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 297).

[4] Hatzfeldt, May 21st, 1900 (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 303).

Thus through excessive prudence a good opportunity for establishing a valuable community of interests with England was let slip. The probability is that the French would never have been able later on to establish themselves securely in Morocco if England and Germany had agreed to a partitioning of the Atlantic seaboard; and instead of forming the foundation of the Franco-British Entente, as afterwards happened, Morocco might have become an apple of discord between the Western Powers. On the other hand, however, an agreement was reached on another important matter.

In the summer of 1900 serious riots broke out in China. The European Embassies were temporarily cut off from all communication with the coast. A relief force of international troops under the command of Sir E. Seymour, which had sought to advance on Pekin, finding the railways destroyed and being without sufficient food and munitions for such a long march, returned to Tientsin after heavy fighting with the Chinese. All the Great Powers including the United States sent considerable reinforcements to the East. On June 17th the Taku forts, which had opened fire on European warships, were stormed. Meanwhile in Pekin the feeling against foreigners was constantly growing more hostile; and on June 18th the German Ambassador, von Ketteler, was murdered. United action on a larger scale seemed an urgent necessity.

As Germany, through the murder of her Ambassador, had been the most seriously injured, and as it was highly probable that a Japanese, a Russian or an English commander-in-chief would meet with strong opposition, the Kaiser wished to see the supreme command in the hands of a German general, indeed, in those of Count Waldersee, formerly Chief of the General Staff. In itself the leadership of this expiatory campaign by a German was not unnatural and might have served to enhance German prestige in the Far East. But there was a want of tact both in the manner of seeking it and of carrying it out. Although Lord Salisbury did not refuse the Kaiser's request he showed no great zeal in proposing a German commander-in-chief, and when the German Ambassador appealed to Count Lamsdorff, the new head of the Russian Government, with no appreciable success, the Kaiser telegraphed direct to the Czar asking if he himself would appoint a commander-in-chief, or would he approve of Count Waldersee being appointed. When the Czar replied that he had nothing against Waldersee, the Kaiser, manipulating the facts of the case, sent word to Paris and London that the Czar had proposed the appointment of Count Waldersee for the post of commander-in-chief. The Czar said nothing and the other Powers offered no opposition, although to the French a German commander was very unwelcome.[1]

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[1] Note to Hatzfeldt, May 23rd. Hatzfeldt, May 27th and June 1st. Bülow to Tschirschky, June 5th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 308, 309, 314, 318).

By the middle of October, when Waldersee arrived in China, the greater part of the military task had already been accomplished. Some of the Powers were then thinking of withdrawing their troops; Russia in particular was anxious to hasten the disbanding and recall of the international army, as the presence in North China of troops other than her own was, for reasons easily understood, highly obnoxious to her. The Kaiser, on the other hand, was eagerly bestirring himself to prevent the recall of the other troops before ample atonement and security for the future had been secured. These struggles brought the problems of the Far East again to the front.

For a long time past Russia had been watching uneasily the growth of English trade and influence in middle China, especially in the Yangtse-Kiang Valley. By means of secret treaties she had secured for herself valuable privileges in Manchuria and the construction of a railway through Chinese territory to Vladivostock and Port Arthur. The great Trans-Siberian railway which was to secure her economic and political predominance in these territories was still under construction. It was precisely because Russia wanted to keep Northern China as her own sphere of influence exclusively, that the idea of an English sphere of influence immediately to the south of her was so obnoxious. As it was well known that the other Powers with trading interests in China did not want an economic partitioning of China, propaganda was begun at St. Petersburg for the neutralization of the valley of the Yangtse. Already in 1897 the Russian Ambassador had mooted this idea at Berlin, but had met with no response.[1] Now at the end of July, 1900, Russia and France together brought up the question of precautionary measures against the expansion of English influence. To these Germany agreed up to a certain point. It was proposed that the surveillance of the Chinese fleet stationed at the mouth of the Yangtse and the protection of the European settlements at Shanghai should be treated as interests common to all the Powers.[2] England was not too well pleased, but she offered no direct opposition.

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[1] Kaiser's telegram to the Czar, August 7th, 1900 (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 82); cf. *Rupport*, 302.

In August the Prince of Wales visited the Kaiser at Wilhelmshohe. In view of the discussions which had previously taken place in Berlin, the Kaiser said to his uncle: There are two possibilities in the Yangtse Valley—either England wants a monopoly there, which she must be prepared to defend by herself, and it will not be easy for her to do this against America; or she can decide for the German point of view of absolute free trade and the "open door." In the latter case the two Powers can stand together against any other which will not recognise this fundamental principle. The Prince and Lascelles, the English Ambassador, who was also present, preferred the latter alternative, and promised to win over Lord Salisbury to that view.[3]

Lord Salisbury agreed to this proposal after considerable hesitation. It is not clear whether he had actually thought of a military and economic control of the Yangtse Valley exclusively in English hands. After long-drawn-out preliminaries Germany formulated her proposals.[4] Both Powers were to agree to the following principles and were to co-operate in securing their maintenance—unrestricted Free Trade for all nations throughout the whole course of the Yangtse-Kiang, renunciation by both Powers of territorial advantages in China, and agreement as to individual territorial compensations in the event of either Power gaining an extension of territory. The other participating Powers, Russia, France, the United States, and Japan, were to be requested to support the first two principles. They were anxious in Berlin to avoid giving offence to Russia.

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[1] Bülow to Osten-Sacken, December 17th, 1897 (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 132).

[2] Von Derenthall's Memorandum, August 20th, 1900 (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 211).

[3] Kaiser to Bülow, August 22nd (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 212).

[4] Despatch to Hatzfeldt, September 22nd, 1900 (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 222).

Lord Salisbury immediately suggested an alteration which completely changed the entire character of the agreement. He wished the validity of these conditions not to be limited to the Yangtse Valley but "to be applied to the river and the sea coast harbours of China without restriction."[1] In the first German draft the proposal indicated a one-sided obligation on England's part for her own sphere of influence. Germany would have been able to introduce a prohibitive system for Kiau-Chou and the province of Shantung, and Russia for Manchuria; or they might have acquired further land there. The German Ambassador discerned in this alteration an attempt to introduce what Germany wished to avoid, a possible source of umbrage to Russia; this the English Premier disputed, declaring that Russia's interests lay in the interior of Manchuria and not on the sea coasts and rivers; if it were a question of any particular harbour in Amur, an exception could be made of it. As acceptance of the application of the treaty to the territory outside the Yangtse Valley was made a *conditio sine qua non*, they decided in Berlin to agree to it. They were undoubtedly influenced by their desire that England should retain her troops in Pechili and support the German conditions for peace with China. England had already been thinking of recalling her troops, but had the Russians or the English withdrawn just as Count Waldersee stepped into the picture, the whole of the Kaiser's mission organised with such fiery zeal would have collapsed in ridicule. After Bülow had expressed his consent to the extension of the scope of the treaty, on condition that the harbours of Amur and Port Arthur were excluded, Lord Salisbury proposed for northern boundary of the neutral territory, the 38th degree of latitude. That excluded from the neutral zone not only the immediate territory occupied by Russia but almost the whole province of Pechili and the northern portion of Sansi. Also he wished it stated in definite terms that both Powers were not to strive after territorial advantages for themselves, and were to oppose unitedly any such attempts on the part of others. This last proviso Bülow declined, as it might have been interpreted as a threat against a third party.[1] Salisbury now proposed to have it stated that there was to be no diminution of any right possessed at present in virtue of existing treaties by one or other of the two Powers in any part of China. This was granted.[2] Even so Salisbury hesitated to give his final consent. The fact that Count Waldersee, after the capture of the harbour of Shan-haik-wan, handed over to the Russians, probably to induce them to leave their troops in the theatre of war, the occupation of the valuable railway line from Pekin to the Yellow Sea, in which English capital was invested, caused dissatisfaction in London. Nor was it allayed when Germany pointed out that it was merely a temporary measure for the duration of the war. Salisbury said that for his part the whole transaction had been more or less spoiled, since Germany had introduced changes favourable to Russia; the other members of the Cabinet called his attention to the fact that the limitation to the territory south of 38° latitude would expose him to violent opposition; it would be regarded as sacrificing to Russia all the territory lying to the north of it. He admitted that he himself had suggested this clause, but nevertheless he wished it altered. It was arranged that both Powers were to defend the principles agreed upon, "for all the Chinese territory in which they had an influence." Although Hatzfeldt pointed out that Salisbury would probably be willing to allow some modifications provided Russia were not exempted from the principle of Free Trade within any definite part of China, Bülow accepted this proposal also with the slight variation "so far as they are able to exercise influence." He hoped in this way to prevent a discussion as to where and how far both Powers actually had influence.[3]

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[1] Hatzfeldt, September 25th, 27th, 28th (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 224-226).

As the German Government further agreed that in the event of foreign aggressions they should aim not at direct territorial expansion, but merely at agreements safeguarding their own interests, all difficulties were finally removed. The treaty was ready for signature, and on October 16th it was published simultaneously in Berlin and London.

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[1] Hatzfeldt, October 2nd. Despatch to Hatzfeldt, October 3rd (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 230, 231).

[2] Hatzfeldt, October 5th. Despatch to Hatzfeldt, October 5th (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 232).

[3] Hatzfeldt, October 8th, 9th, 10th. Despatches to Hatzfeldt, October 9th and 12th (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 233-243).

Salisbury's skill had undoubtedly evolved a settlement quite different from the original Russian proposal and from the first German draft. In order to secure England's support for the termination of the Boxer War and her good will in the many claims for compensation opened up by the South African War, Bülow ventured upon the extremely ambiguous and unsatisfactory definition of the obligations of both sides, and thereby created a situation which in the event of further Russian aggression in North China might have led to very unpleasant results. We had made Lord Salisbury's position easier for him in his own country without feeling certain in return that he would expound the new formula in the manner which Germany felt was due to her, considering the whole course of the negotiations. The danger of a difference in interpretation was increased by the fact that at the beginning of November Lord Salisbury, who had personally conducted the negotiations, resigned his post at the Foreign Office owing to reasons of health, and was succeeded by Lord Lansdowne, though he still remained Prime Minister. The resignation of Prince Hohenlohe, the Imperial Chancellor, which took place about that time (October 18th) had no effect on the general policy of Germany. The conduct of foreign affairs had for a long time past been in the hands of Bülow, the Secretary of State, who now succeeded him as Imperial Chancellor and remained the dominating personality.

Only a few weeks later the first difference arose over the interpretation of the Yangtse Treaty, when the Russian General Leneitch, with the consent of the Chinese Government, occupied a district on the south bank of the Pei-ho in immediate proximity to the European settlements at Tientsin. At first Russia declared that it was only intended to be a temporary occupation, but later on in reply to a German query, she stated that it was a matter of private property for building purposes, not a question of state prerogatives. England considered Russia's proceedings so suspicious that she wanted not only to summon all the participating Powers to conclude an agreement for cancelling all the concessions granted by the Chinese Government since the

Boxer riots, but also to raise the question direct in Berlin as to whether Germany did not consider these proceedings an infringement of the Yangtse Treaty (January 28th, 1901). Bülow would not agree to this, since high state prerogatives had not been claimed by Russia, and also because no preparations, according to information received, had been made for the military defence of the occupied territory.[1]

Thus differences of opinion in the interpretation of the agreement had already shown themselves. Although the treaties regarding South Africa, East Asia, and the South Seas seemed to have removed so many causes of friction, no real confidence had been established between either the Governments or the peoples of Germany and England. The two nations viewed each other with suspicion and attributed evil motives to every small difference. Press and Parliament in both countries were constantly giving expression to this distrust. Yet far-sighted men on both sides of the water acknowledged the feeling that we were of the same kin, that both peoples, if they dealt honourably by one another, were unassailable economically and politically and might long maintain unbroken the peace of the world.

Once again Chamberlain, the clearest exponent of this idea, entered the lists. His new attempt took place almost at the moment of the accession to the throne of King Edward VII.

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[1] Mumm, November 10th. Hatzfeldt, November 21st and 30th, 1900 (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 263, 264). Muhlberg's comment on the English inquiry, January 28th, 1901. Radolin, January 28th; Despatch to Hatzfeldt, January 29th, and to Metternich, February 7th; Hatzfeldt, February 1st (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 281-295).

## VII. GERMANY AND ENGLAND AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

On January 22nd, 1901, Queen Victoria died and was succeeded by Edward VII. This change of Sovereign appeared at the outset to exercise no appreciable influence on Anglo-German relations. The personal influence of the ruling Sovereign in England is not nearly so great as in the continental monarchies. King Edward has certainly shown how much a wise man in his position can do through tactful consideration of the conditions in his own country. But he had first of all to build up his own position gradually, and, with men of the type of Salisbury or Chamberlain, it was only by great prudence that he could carry out his own particular ideas. Whether the new King was as bitter an opponent of Germany from the very outset as is almost generally believed here, can only be proved when English evidence of a more confidential kind has become accessible. In any case his personal relations with his nephew were never very good. He was sixty years of age when he came to the throne and he had often felt bitterly that whenever they appeared together, his nephew, so much younger than himself, was always in the forefront and himself in the background. Moreover, to the quiet, practical man of business, the Kaiser's demonstrative and ostentatious manner and irrepressible temperament were intensely antipathetic. Knowing the Kaiser's influence on German politics, and probably, like many others, believing it much greater than it really was, his estimate of Wilhelm II.'s personality filled him with deep distrust of German policy. On the news of the serious illness of his grandmother, the Kaiser hastened at once to London and saw the aged Queen still in life. He was received by the Royal Family and the populace generally with the utmost cordiality, and felt, as he always did in England, greatly attracted by English ways. His visit lasted for fourteen days and he took advantage of the opportunity to have conversations on important political matters with the new King and Lord Lansdowne.[1]

There was a good pretext for this, as shortly before the Queen's death Chamberlain and the Duke of Devonshire, who were both members of the Cabinet, had a confidential discussion on the subject of an alliance[2] with the Freiherr von Eckardstein, then acting temporarily as Ambassador in place of Count Hatzfeldt, who was again ill. They began by stating that England could no longer remain isolated as hitherto. It was for her to choose whether she would throw in her lot with the Triple Alliance or the Dual Alliance. They expressed a preference for the Triple Alliance and judged it prudent to prepare the way by further understandings on specific matters and, to begin with, on the future of Morocco. Should it turn out, however, that an understanding with Germany was not attainable, they would be forced to join with Russia and France, which many of their colleagues preferred, although they knew that a high price would be required; Northern China and the Persian Gulf would eventually have to be sacrificed.[3]

In Berlin this overture was received with the same distrust as its predecessors. Holstein declared the threatened understanding with Russia and France was mere bluff. England could not escape a fight for her existence by this means, it would only make the conditions worse under which she would have to fight. As Germany, by concluding such a treaty, exposed herself to the risk of war with Russia, she must insist on very considerable services in return. England would only consent to such when she realised much more acutely than she did then that she was in a sore plight.[4]

But there was felt to be a special cause for distrust just then. In spite of the treaty concluded in August, 1898, with Germany as to the Portuguese colonies, England had refused to prevent

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[1] Fischer's book, *Holsteins Grosses Nein, 1898-1901*, in its great bulk and superabundance of official documents, offers an occasional valuable comment but does not in any way affect the fundamental characteristics as defined in the first edition of my book. The two estimates are identical. Fischer seems not to have known my narrative.

[2] *Vide* Eckardstein's *Lebenserinnerungen*, ii. 234 f.

[3] Hatzfeldt, January 18th, 1901. Eckardstein, ii. 238 (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 16).

[4] Holstein to Metternich, January 21st (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 22).

Portugal from using European sources of revenue as cover for the issue of a loan. Salisbury maintained that the treaty only bound him to interfere if Portugal mortgaged the customs in Angola or Mozambique for a loan ; and there he was undoubtedly in the right. But in Germany they had expected that England, by refusing other credits as well, would bring about the financial collapse of Portugal and so hasten the moment when these colonies would actually be partitioned. Instead of which, they had to look on and see King Carlos visiting Windsor in the spring of 1899 and Anglo-Portuguese relations growing firmer than ever. The Ministry at Lisbon openly proclaimed the close terms of their friendship and their alliance with England, and at the outbreak of the Boer War they allowed the English the use of the Delagoa railway for military transport.

They did not yet know in Berlin that during King Manoel's visit the old treaty of alliance between England and Portugal, dating back to the seventeenth century, had been definitely renewed. According to it Great Britain pledged herself to protect all present and future possessions of Portugal. This so-called " Windsor Treaty " did not run counter in any way to the text of the Anglo-German agreements, in which no actual despoiling of Portugal was contemplated. But it was difficult to reconcile it with the spirit of these agreements, in which it was implied though not expressed that Portugal, without any force being used, was to be compelled under the pressure of financial necessity to evacuate her colonies to Germany and England. Portugal had got wind of the existence of this agreement and cleverly took advantage of the strained relations between England and Germany over the Samoan question to obtain the renewal of this old treaty which had never been formally abrogated. Salisbury evidently thought that he could not refuse the Portuguese request without rousing the suspicion that he had planned an immediate partitioning of the colonies with Germany against Portugal's wish. Possibly, too, the desire to avoid any difficulties in the use of the Delagoa railway, in the event of a South African War, also counted for something. Added to that, as already stated, there was the tension with Germany. And so Portugal got her wish.

Although as yet the German Government knew nothing about the conclusion of the Windsor Treaty,[1] they saw unmistakable signs of a strong Anglo-Portuguese rapprochement. Bülow regarded it as a symptom that England was playing false to the agreement of 1898. "After this experience," he wrote, "we must consider whether, when the next opportunity presents itself, we should conclude an agreement *à longue échéance*, or after the manner of the treaties in the earlier centuries, immediately before it comes into action." If England had been disappointed by America's attitude in the question of the Panama Canal, that would bring nearer the moment for negotiating with her; till then it was better to wait, and while drawing her attention to public opinion, to put her off till some future date.

The Kaiser, when he had reached London, and had talked matters over with Eckardstein, took a more favourable view of matters and telegraphed to Bülow: "They are coming on, it seems, just where we had expected."[2] Bülow was thereupon overwhelmed with anxiety lest the Kaiser in this mood might enter upon binding engagements and thereby render impossible his carefully thought-out policy of reserve. He replied immediately that it was beginning to dawn on the people that they could not maintain their world empire by themselves. "Everything now depends on neither discouraging the English nor letting ourselves be captured by them prematurely." Their embarrassments would increase, and so would the price we should demand. "Any eagerness would diminish our prospects of gain." "It would be a veritable master-stroke if, in view of the general political situation, Your Majesty were to succeed in inspiring in Englishmen of official rank the hope of a future firm alliance with us without either bond or settlement being undertaken prematurely at present." The threatened understanding with the Dual Alliance was simply "a hideous spectre invented to terrify us." On no account was England to be allowed to think that our relations with Russia were not good.[3] He counselled Eckardstein and Wolff-Metternich, who accompanied the Kaiser, to impress these views upon him.

The Kaiser was evidently reluctant to comply with these arguments. He vented his wrath freely at Russia's "perfidy" in the Far East. His intercourse with the new King was much more friendly than it had ever been before. He said to Metternich that he could not always hesitate between Russia and England; otherwise he would end by falling between two stools. The Ambassador stated his view to the effect that England, weakened in prestige and power by an inglorious war, might prove a feeble friend, while Russia might become a powerful enemy. "We should neither lend the Russians our money nor the English our men." England, said he, must at least offer a defensive alliance sanctioned by Parliament, against two aggressors, and assist Germany to obtain coaling-stations. But it seemed as if she only wanted to tie us down regarding Russia. The Kaiser finally agreed that it was advisable to wait for a solid English offer with definite services in return before binding ourselves, and until then not to ease off our relations with Russia.[1]

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[1] Further details were only obtained when the negotiations on the future of Portuguese Africa were resumed in 1912-1914. *Vide* Chapter XVII.

[2] Kaiser's telegram to Bülow, January 20th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 17).

[3] Bülow's telegram to the Kaiser, January 21st (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 20).

In his conversations with the King and Lansdowne he confined himself accordingly to more general reflections. He sought to convince them that their trust in America was of little avail and that an understanding between Russia and the United States to keep other Europeans out of China was not an impossibility. Russia was already ordering war material in America and seeking to raise a loan there. The great question of the future was whether the world was to belong to the Slav or the Germanic races. The Latin nations could never again become dominant. He himself was anxious to maintain the peace as long as possible so that Germany might become strong internally and able to extend her commerce further afield.[2]

So the Kaiser went back to Germany without having committed himself. On King Edward's return visit to Friedrichshof in the end of February, the question of an alliance was only alluded to in a passing comment.[3] But in London cautious inquiries were being pushed further. The news from the East announced that the Russian admiral, Alexeieff, by a treaty with the Chinese Viceroy, Li-Hung-Chang, had secured the virtual control of the whole of Manchuria. Japan and England summoned Germany to join with them in a protest to the Emperor of China. Hatzfeldt considered that without adequate compensation and securities Germany could not risk a breach with Russia. Lord Lansdowne again talked of an alliance. Hatzfeldt believed his proposal was sincerely meant but not sufficiently thought out, and he advised Berlin to try to obtain more definite offers, as a direct refusal would send England into the arms of the Dual Alliance. He warned them also that an understanding between Great Britain, France and Russia was by no means impossible.[1]

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[1] Metternich to Bülow, January 22nd (not in *Grosse Politik*); to the Foreign Office, February 4th (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 295).

[2] Kaiser to Bülow, January 29th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 24). Cp. Eckardstein to Holstein, January 29th and February 2nd (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 23 and xvi. 290).

[3] Metternich to the Foreign Office, February 25th (not in *Grosse Politik*). The Kaiser in a conversation called his uncle's attention to the necessity of "linking Japan to us and to England because of the supremacy of her navy in the Far East."

The German Government also was dissatisfied with Russia's conduct in the Far East. Bülow notified London that he was prepared to send word to China that according to German ideas, it was unwarrantable to grant special privileges to a single combatant Power before the general terms of peace and the military indemnities had been settled.[2] The German declaration was handed in at Pekin along with more sharply worded protests from England and Japan, and drew from Russia the bitter complaint that Germany had thereby acted counter to the Kaiser's promise to support the Czar in his East Asiatic policy. Bülow disputed this, stating that we had not pledged ourselves to further Russian designs on Manchuria, and in our own interests we must insist that China's ability to fulfil her general obligations must not be tampered with.[3] He was determined to remain neutral in a war in East Asia, and he informed Japan of that fact. But he was just as unwilling to take risks for Russia as for England.

> "In view of the present state of public opinion in Germany with regard to England," he wrote to Holstein, "it is not practicable to consolidate our general policy by adopting the English policy in China as our own, even although we were to obtain an alliance with England in exchange."[4]

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[1] Hatzfeldt, February 7th and 10th (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 311 and xvii. 30).

[2] Despatch to Hatzfeldt, February 11th. Hatzfeldt, February 12th (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 317 and 319).

[3] Bülow's comments on this conversation with Osten-Sacken, February 17th (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 325).

[4] Holstein to Bülow, February 9th. Bülow to Holstein, February 9th. Bülow to Hatzfeldt, March 5th, enclosing Bismarck's letter to Salisbury of 1887 (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 39).

The English interpretation of the Yangtse agreement, according to which we were bound to uphold China's integrity unimpaired and to defend Manchuria against the Russians, the Imperial Chancellor declined to accept in his speech in the Reichstag on March 15th. In reply to questions in the House of Commons, Lord Lansdowne upheld the view that in the preliminary negotiations the German reservation with regard to Manchuria only applied to economic questions, whereas in the duty of maintaining China's political status there were no restrictions, which showed a very considerable divergence of view. As the English interpretation was considered disloyal in Berlin, it made them all the more cautious about the negotiations for an alliance. Holstein instructed Hatzfeldt on no account to hurry matters, but rather to hold off and see if England would of herself propose a defensive treaty which would take effect as soon as one of the contracting parties was attacked by two Powers. They could then take it up seriously in preference to a special agreement regarding Morocco. But public opinion could only be won over if some tangible advantage were offered on the English side, such as support of Germany's claims for compensation in China and the raising of the Chinese customs.

Holstein had no belief in the sincerity of England's wishes so long as Lord Salisbury was in office. He had the feeling that they had been led on by empty promises in the African Colonial treaty and that something similar would always happen. He would have preferred to see England and Japan take energetic action together against Russia without Germany's co-operation. In agreement with Bülow he laid down the following instructions for the conduct of our policy. "We remain neutral and only conclude an alliance when there are actual facts to prove that it is not of use only to England." [1]

After some hesitation, largely due to mistrust lest we might again communicate all the English overtures to St. Petersburg,[2] Lord Lansdowne, on March 18th, asked the definite question whether it would be possible to draw up a defensive alliance for a long term between Germany and England. If Germany consented to this in principle he would bring forward more definite proposals. Eckardstein urgently reminded his Government that English policy was at the parting of the ways and that the answer was of decisive significance.[1]

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[1] Holstein to Hatzfeldt, February 11th and March 1st (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 317, 329).

[2] This suspicion Chamberlain admitted quite frankly to Eckardstein. Eckardstein, March 18th (ii. 277).

Holstein admitted the truth of this, and that Germany also had reached a turning point. He declared he was in favour of such an alliance in principle, but unfortunately distrust on both sides, and Lord Salisbury's personality, complicated matters. It would be best to have an agreement, not between Germany and England, but between the Triple Alliance and England, and eventually to include Japan as well. Although there were voices raised at the Foreign Office advising a frank acceptance of the English proposal, the Imperial Chancellor agreed with Holstein, and even considered whether or not Roumania and Turkey should also be included. His main objection was that we should need to cover all England's colonial possessions, which were exposed to danger at various points, whereas ours were not even threatened. But in spite of our weariness of colonial matters the Government would find it difficult to conciliate public opinion if further acquisitions were obtained by others without anything accruing to us. Nevertheless he issued an official instruction to the London Embassy to accord Lord Lansdowne's ideas a sympathetic reception, provided the proposed arrangement applied solely to the security of present possessions. But as Germany would need first of all to notify the other members of the Triple Alliance of any English proposal, it would help to expedite the negotiations if England immediately approached Vienna. If Austria agreed, Germany would have no hesitation in looking closer into the matter. Japan's co-operation might then be possible also.[2]

Eckardstein had already sounded Baron Hayashi, the Japanese Ambassador in London, who showed a cordial interest in the idea. In Tokio they were just then considering the question of immediate war with Russia and would naturally have welcomed such a league as a protection for their rear. Eckardstein, who was married to an Englishwoman and very friendly to England in his social relations and his way of thinking, was anxious, for political reasons, to have the alliance carried through, but considered the idea of an immediate approach to Austria unpractical, and a mere whim of Holstein's, and, in spite of the express command of his Government, he did not at once open up the subject in London with the haste enjoined upon him.[1]

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[1] Eckardstein, March 19th (ii. 279).

[2] Holstein to Eckardstein, March 20th (ii. 281). Despatch to Hatzfeldt, March 20th, with marginal comments by Bülow (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 44); for Klehmet's memorandum of March 20th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 43).

Lansdowne now cautiously ventured a step further. With the express authority of Salisbury and Balfour, on March 23rd, he submitted the following concrete questions to Hatzfeldt:

1. Will the German Government, in spite of the anti-English state of their public opinion, enter upon a binding defensive agreement with England?

2. If the answer is in the affirmative would they prefer an unconditional defensive alliance, or an agreement the terms of which would become operative if one of the contracting parties were attacked by several Powers?

3. Would they choose a secret agreement or one sanctioned by Parliament?

4. Would Japan, so far as concerns Eastern Asia, be taken into consideration? [2]

Bülow commissioned the Ambassador to reply immediately to the following effect:

1. The most practical thing for all parties and in every relation would be for England to join the Triple Alliance.

2. The treaty would only become operative if there were two or more opponents; which would be more closely defined.

3. The agreement must not be secret but sanctioned by Parliament.

4. Japan wants a policy of acquisitions and would not see any unqualified advantage in a defensive alliance. All the same she would receive this much of advantage, that she would then enter good political company.[3]

With these views to guide him, Eckardstein had a further interview with Lord Lansdowne, but found him reluctant about including Austria and Italy and about immediate Parliamentary control and publicity ; later on both might be considered. With Japan the English Minister thought both Powers might conclude a special restricted agreement, solely with regard to Eastern questions.[1] Eckardstein considered this answer very favourable. The truth was that Lord Lansdowne had unhesitatingly opposed the two essential German conditions—joining the Triple Alliance and immediate acceptance by Parliament.

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[1] By his own admission (ii. 286).

[2] Hatzfeldt, March 23rd, with marginal comments by Bülow (*Grosse Politik*, xvii, 46).

[3] Despatch to Hatzfeldt, March 24 (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 48).

Under these circumstances little was expected at Berlin from a continuance of the discussion. On the other hand the Kaiser, instigated by Waldersee, pressed for a speedy settlement of the Chinese war costs and for indemnities for German subjects who had suffered loss in South Africa. He was inclined to regard difficulties in these minor matters as symptoms of England's bad faith towards us. In order to get these points settled, Dr. Stübel, of the Colonial Office, was sent to London at the end of March. He soon convinced himself that there were valid and substantial reasons against the adjustment of these matters proposed by his Government, and on his return to Berlin he exercised a tranquillising influence.[2]

Meanwhile the Dual Alliance Powers had noticed that something was afoot and did their utmost in London to sow distrust of Germany. With Balfour they had apparently some temporary success, since the Kaiser complained to King Edward of remarks made by Balfour about him in private conversation. But these trivial personalities were eventually smoothed over and had practically no influence on the march of events.[3]

In Berlin, however, Russia's excited statements exercised a certain influence. The Czar found himself obliged, owing to a protest from the three Powers, to renounce the Manchurian Treaty concluded by General Alexeieff, and he sent word to Berlin that it was largely Germany's conspicuous share in this unfriendly action that had compelled him to give way.[3] As the Kaiser did not wish to imperil his relations with Russia, this was a warning to him to avoid carefully any further complications in the Far East.

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[1] Eckardstein (ii. 287).

[2] Hatzfeldt, April 6th. Despatch to Hatzfeldt, April 10th. King Edward to the Kaiser, April 16th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 50-52).

[3] Richthofen's dispatch, April 4th (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 350).

For weeks together the negotiations for the alliance made no progress. Only an occasional remark now and then showed that Lansdowne was busily studying the previous attempts at an alliance, from Bismarck's famous letter in 1887 to the Kaiser's conversation with Lascelles in the summer of 1898, so that the matter was not being lost sight of.[1] Japan's attempt to carry through a special treaty for the maintenance of the integrity of China was rejected by Holstein until the position with England had been cleared up.

At the end of April, when Hatzfeldt had returned to the Embassy, rumours of France's threatening designs on the Chinese province of Yunnan and against the Sultan of Morocco induced Lord Lansdowne to take up again the question of the alliance. In Berlin they adhered to the old standpoint as formulated in March. Acting on Holstein's suggestion, Bülow supplemented these instructions by adding that special treaties of every kind were to be avoided whether about the Far East or Morocco. Otherwise we might get ourselves embroiled with Russia or France, besides endangering the possibility of a general treaty of alliance which the English might then consider superfluous.[2]

Hatzfeldt consequently continued his rôle of awaiting events. When Lansdowne on one occasion remarked that Germany by her policy in Asia Minor would sooner or later collide with Russia, he disputed it and declared that our plans were purely economic and French capital also would be involved in the Bagdad railway. We could at any time withdraw from China and have a permanent understanding with Russia. During the discussion Lord Lansdowne remarked that Lord Salisbury no longer had any objection to a defensive alliance with Germany, but he objected to the inclusion of Austria and Italy. This was therefore an attempt to find out how Germany would act on the collapse of the Danube Monarchy, "which to human calculation cannot survive the decease of the Emperor Francis Joseph." What would happen, for instance, if, in the case of an internal crisis in the Danube State, Russia intervened, and at the same time Turkey demanded the return of Bosnia? What obligations ought England to undertake if Italy were attacked by France and Spain on account of Morocco or of some other Mediterranean question? Such matters would inevitably crop up in Parliament. Public opinion was inclined to an alliance with Germany as a powerful kindred people developing on a liberal basis, but not with the semi-Slav State of Austria and with Latin Italy. A special treaty could be concluded with Japan to defend Chinese integrity. Finally Lansdowne proposed that both he and Hatzfeldt should commit to paper the draft of a treaty which would provide a solid basis for discussion.[1]

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[1] Eckardstein, April 2nd, 9th, 10th, 13th, 18th (ii. 328 334, 335, 337, 341).

[2] Note to Hatzfeldt, April 20th and May 11th. The Kaiser to Bülow, May 14th. Bülow to the Kaiser, May 15th (*Grosse Politik*, xvi. 408 and xvii. 54. *Ibid.* xvi. 424 and 426).

In Berlin they held the view that Salisbury was merely seeking pretexts to avoid undertaking definite obligations. Austria still had vitality, but should she collapse it would then be easy to come to an understanding with Russia. An alliance could only be thought of on condition that the Triple Alliance should be liable for service in the defence of the entire colonial empire of Britain against two attacking Powers, and England be liable to defend any one member of the Triple Alliance attacked by two great Powers; otherwise if Italy or Austria were attacked and we were obliged to help, England might contend that the terms of the treaty were not operative. A treaty which left this back door open would be worse than none for Germany. As the text of the treaty was to be made public, opponents would thus be able to arrange matters so as to secure themselves against England's participation in the event of war. This back door must therefore be closed. As soon as England showed that she realised what was implied in this condition, which must be frankly explained to her, they would be willing to communicate the text of the Triple Alliance.[2]

Hatzfeldt advised that we should first come to a settlement with England, then with Austria and Italy, and after that proceed to draw up the draft of a treaty, trusting to Lansdowne's discretion. Again the point was emphasised that details could not be considered until England agreed to the principle that the terms of the treaty became operative if Germany had to go to the defence of Austria, were she attacked. The Ambassador was to state this frankly and then, without pressing the matter, wait for the English Minister to return to the subject. If he did not, the negotiations might then be considered a failure.

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[1] Hatzfeldt, May 15th, 16th, 17th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 57-60).

[2] Note to Hatzfeldt, May 18th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 60).

On May 23rd Hatzfeldt brought forward this point of view in an interview with Lansdowne, adding that the treaty would have the great advantage for England of securing the whole of her immense empire against attack and the maintenance of the peace of the world, so necessary for her trade, for ten or fifteen years. England, in return, must undertake equivalent duties. A form of alliance in which only one side reaped any advantage and undertook no risks had never yet been discovered. These statements impressed Lansdowne and he promised to repeat them to Lord Salisbury.

In Berlin Hatzfeldt's conduct gave great satisfaction. Nevertheless he was expressly forbidden to part with the slightest written note until England had consented to the fundamental principles of the treaty as proposed by Germany; for until she did so there was no proof of a serious intention on her part. Once that was agreed to, written statements could be made. Lansdowne would understand this precaution. It was quite another matter if the English Minister himself requested written information on particular points in such a way as to place the English initiative beyond doubt. No attempt was made to formulate in writing the terms of an alliance, in spite of Hatzfeldt's urgent pressure, and his hands were tied by the stringent instructions sent him from Berlin.[1]

As Lord Lansdowne was abroad for a long time, Hatzfeldt was still far from well, and the Foreign Office had little confidence in Eckardstein, further negotiations were mostly conducted in Berlin, where they were guided by the advice of Count Metternich, who was looked upon as Hatzfeldt's successor in London.

Metternich strongly advocated an alliance with England subject to the precautions already indicated. Russia, he declared, would never be completely won over by Germany, as its present position, in which it was sought after by both sides, was highly advantageous. If Austria were to break up, we should have to fight Russia over the inheritance. We had no longer so many means of bringing pressure to bear on England since Salisbury had withdrawn from Turkey. We had rejected previous proposals for treaties because, under the pressure of the Franco-Russian alliance, we dared not leave anything undone to win over Russia to ourselves. But this had proved impossible. Of course we could try to remain without alliances, but we then ran the danger of England coming to an understanding with France or Russia. Italy inclined that way in any case and would be very insecure as soon as England joined our enemies. Help in any possible conflict with America, or greater compliance in colonial matters, we certainly could not expect from England even if she were allied to us. There was no prospect at present of any immediate attack on England's colonial empire such as the alliance would bind us to repel. Russia would certainly blame us if she were compelled to fall back in Eastern Asia, but as war would then be much more dangerous for the Czar's empire, the likelihood of war breaking out would thus be diminished and not increased. Publicity and parliamentary sanction were indispensable conditions. In the Reichstag difficulties were to be expected from the partisans both of the Boers and of the Russians; hence it would probably be wise to await the end of the Boer War. Then it could no longer be said that the alliance was of little use to us because England's military forces might be held up in South Africa for a long time. The best way to commend the alliance to public opinion was to show that Austria and Italy urgently required such support and that we could not have deferred the matter any longer without endangering the existence of the Triple Alliance. As soon as we had reached a settlement with England, we should set negotiations going between Vienna and London, as far as possible under our secret direction. In China an alliance with England would be particularly advantageous for the development of our industrial undertakings, as the Russians were endeavouring to obtain the political supremacy and the Americans the industrial supremacy out there.[1] Careful as he was in his consideration for Holstein's and Bülow's modes of thinking, Metternich himself was undoubtedly more than either of them in favour of an early conclusion of the alliance with England.

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[1] Hatzfeldt, May 25th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 31st. Despatch to Hatzfeldt, May 26th. Holstein to Hatzfeldt, May 29th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 67-73).

The marginal comments of the Imperial Chancellor on this memorandum show that he did not consider the divergence between Germany and Russia so great as did Metternich, and that he was more doubtful of the sincerity of the English overture. The following remark is highly characteristic :

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[1] Metternich's memorandum, June 1st (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 74).

> " The great objection to any understanding with England is, that the Russians (Court and public opinion) would vent all their disappointment and rage on us and the English would take advantage of this to improve their position with Russia, in spite of the alliance, and to treat us harshly in colonial questions."

Holstein also stated his views again on the alliance problem. He starts from the premise that it has always been England's policy to get others to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for her ; this had been the case especially with Lord Salisbury. In many isolated questions we had come to a satisfactory understanding ; others, such as Morocco, remained unsettled because there were no compensations available to counterbalance the danger of war. An agreement such as at present planned could be justified if, on two Powers attacking one portion of the British Empire, the object of the struggle was not the possession of this or that colony but the adjustment of the balance of power in the world. Such an obligation Germany could only undertake if she were sure that England would join in action should any member of the Triple Alliance be attacked by two Great Powers. The inclusion of Austria would be a clear sign that neither we nor England would see the Hapsburg monarchy shattered by Czech agitation. The German Government did not underrate the significance of England's affiliation to the Triple Alliance, but it was doubtful whether the "chestnut" theory were not still too strong in England for it to be generally recognised there that England too must undertake duties in return. Hence we ought to wait and see if England evinced serious intentions and advanced acceptable principles. If this did not happen it did not greatly matter. " We feel ourselves strong enough at present not to need to look round in haste for support." Possibly Germany and England, through the current of wide-world events, which was stronger than any individual will, might yet be forced on to the same side. No barriers should be erected which might prevent that, but we must wait in complete liberty so long as circumstances permitted. " Neither Yunnan nor Morocco are important enough for Germany to risk a war or to be compelled to seek support."[1] The Imperial Chancellor spoke in the same strain to the English Ambassador on June 17th.

As both sides adhered to their own standpoint, the negotiations made small progress. King Edward merely expressed to Count Hatzfeldt, in a private audience, a general wish that the two countries should come to a satisfactory understanding, and he admitted that Lord Salisbury was not very hopeful. He showed great animosity against Russia and her intentions in the Far East. Bülow came to the conclusion that the main thing was not to be too eager, and that England must be allowed time to realise that no confidence could be placed in Russia's promises.[2] Lansdowne avoided further discussion on the pretext that he was overwhelmed with parliamentary business. Indirectly he indicated that as matters had not progressed Salisbury had lost interest somewhat in the negotiations, there being no apparent necessity for them as regarded England.[3] In London they had repeatedly urged the conclusion of a special agreement, at least about Morocco, but the Imperial Chancellor declined this request for reasons with which we are already familiar. He did not believe that France would venture on any serious step so long as the position between England and Germany was not clear, and he issued the following instruction: "In this circumstance we must await developments with absolute reserve and maintain a sphinx-like demeanour." A French success in Morocco seemed preferable to taking dangerous risks without the certainty of absolute reciprocity on England's part. If this were secured then certainly the alliance with England might substantially prolong the life of the Triple Alliance which Holstein declared to be somewhat shaky just then.[4]

Meanwhile the English Ministers had come to their decision. England might ally herself with Germany but not with the Triple Alliance. So Lascelles informed Eckardstein in July. Later on, Lansdowne, speaking for himself and Lord Salisbury, said definitely that in view of the state of public opinion in both countries and Parliaments this obstacle seemed to them too formidable. In Berlin they concluded from this that they must on no account fall out with Russia. The right policy was to "wait with calm nerves and sealed lips" as long as was practicable. The Kaiser, who was leaving in August for Homburg, to meet King Edward there, was urgently entreated not to forget for one moment "that our relations with England would be ruined as soon as it was known there that we had differences with France and Russia."[1] The Kaiser agreed with these remarks. In Homburg outstanding questions were discussed on the basis of a memorandum given by the English Cabinet to King Edward, who submitted it to the Kaiser against the Prime Minister's wish. King Edward seemed then very favourably inclined towards an understanding, as he was considerably perturbed at the forthcoming visit of the Czar and Count Muravieff to Paris, which looked like a demonstration against England. He knew also that on his return journey the Czar was visiting the Kaiser and had specially requested the Imperial Chancellor's presence at the meeting. The Kaiser thought it prudent to let his uncle feel that a complete understanding among the continental Powers was no longer so difficult as formerly. If England, said he, is willing to abandon her isolation and ally herself with Germany, he must request the conclusion of a treaty with the combined Triple Alliance, with strictly defined terms, sanctioned by an overwhelming majority in Parliament. "We should then know that England's people and King are ready to share the consequences through thick and thin with the Central Powers on the Continent." King Edward and Lascelles, the Ambassador, to the Kaiser's astonishment, heartily agreed to this, and thought that Lord Lansdowne would be ready "to bring the matter up were it not that the parliamentary session was too short; but he would work diligently in this direction." In addition to the question of compensations for German subjects in South Africa and the general situation in the Far East, the terminus for the Bagdad railway was also discussed. England was openly seeking to gain the virtual sovereignty over the territory of the

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[1] Holstein's memorandum, June 14th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 83).

[2] Hatzfeldt, June 15th, with marginal comments by Bülow (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 83).

[3] Eckardstein to Holstein, July 29th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 90).

[4] Despatches to Hatzfeldt, April 13th and 20th, July 19th, and August 9th. Holstein to Hatzfeldt, August 8th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 326, 328, 337, 339, 341). Mühlberg's memorandum, August 8th.

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[1] Holstein's memorandum for the impending discussion at Homburg; Bülow to the Foreign Office, August 9th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 92, 339, 341).

Sheik of Koweit, nominally a vassal of the Sultan, because it contained the disputed strip of coast on the Persian Gulf. It was now ascertained that England would put no difficulties in the way of the construction of the railway there, on the stipulation, however, that there should previously be a definite settlement of all outstanding questions. With regard to Morocco it was agreed that it would be best if both Powers refrained from intervention but protected the integrity of the country and the Sultan's authority.[1]

The Kaiser was informed in a general way of the progress of the negotiations for the alliance, although he may not have learned all the details. The statement to the contrary in Eckardstein's memoirs rests manifestly on defective knowledge. Although at Homburg both monarchs seemed unanimous about the fundamental points, there was a complete lull in the negotiations during the following months. In Berlin England's handling of the Koweit question roused fresh suspicion. Holstein viewed it as a slight on the Kaiser, who had been led to believe that England respected the Sultan's sovereignty whereas she herself was in reality controlling it. Such proceedings might give the impetus to a partitioning of Turkey such as Salisbury had had under consideration in 1895. "When England treads such paths, it is out of the question for her at the same time to be honestly considering an alliance with us." Lascelles also had frankly stated that a treaty with the entire Triple Alliance was impossible. "Salisbury's policy is after all the policy of England and we must remind ourselves that one-sided considerations for anyone who knows no consideration are sheer waste." [2] With the English Ministers, Chamberlain especially, the impression remained that Germany had never really been in earnest, but rather had kept them dangling for years and had used the situation as a pretext for asking colonial concessions. In June Chamberlain said to Alfred Rothschild that he would have nothing more to do with the Berlin people. "If they are so short-sighted and cannot see that it is a question of the rise of a new constellation in the world, they are beyond help." [1] After Germany had treated evasively a demarcation of the spheres of interest in Morocco, and the Kaiser at Homburg had reiterated the old conditions in the most aggressive manner, Chamberlain finally gave up hope. The meeting of the Czar and the Kaiser in Danzig in September increased the distrust of the English, and in the late autumn there were further signs that the phase of the English overtures for an alliance had come to an end. *The Times* openly advocated an understanding with Russia, since all attempts to unite with Germany had failed, and began to agitate against the German navy and to use the alleged plan of a German surprise at sea as a spectre to scare the imagination of the English people. On October 25th Chamberlain delivered a speech in Birmingham in which he said that none of the cruel and barbarous acts for which the English had been reproached in the South African War was to be compared with the deeds of other nations, among them of the Germans in 1870. Public opinion in Germany, which was hostile to England, expressed itself in violent protests, and a storm of indignation and abuse of Chamberlain and of the English conduct of the war in South Africa, broke out all over Germany. Bülow himself in the Reichstag gave vigorous expression to this sentiment.

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[1] English memorandum of August 10th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 121). The Kaiser to Bülow, August 23rd. Bülow to the Kaiser, August 24th.

[2] Holstein's memorandum, September 3rd. Bülow's letter is an instructive example of his method of flattering the Kaiser; *vide* Fischer, *Holsteins Grosses Nein*, p. 214.

No doubt Chamberlain gave this speech later on a somewhat less combative character. No doubt King Edward told the new German Ambassador, Count Metternich, that he hoped the latter would occupy a confidential position with him similar to that of Lascelles with the Kaiser; no doubt Lord Lansdowne more than once expressed his hopes for continued good relations and friendly understanding in special questions; and no doubt on the German side Holstein endeavoured to persuade the English press that it ought not to represent German policy as hostile to England, the fact being that he wanted to keep open the possibility of an alliance for the future, so as not to be wholly dependent on Russia.[2] Nothing, however, could alter the fact that the idea of an alliance had been given up. In November Chamberlain said to the Austrian Ambassador that in view of the growing hatred of England among the German people he despaired of being able to win over public opinion in his own country in its favour.[1] Lansdowne also avoided any further discussion of the subject, and Metternich's remark, that an opportunity such as had occurred that summer might never come back, he received in silence. The negotiations were not yet officially broken off, but this point was reached before the year was over.

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[1] Rothschild to Eckardstein (ii. 300).

[2] Metternich, September 9th, October 28th and 29th. Bülow to the Kaiser, October 30th. Holstein's report of a conversation with the *Times* correspondent, Chirol, October 31st. Holstein to Bülow, November 1st (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 101 and 106).

On December 27th Lascelles announced in Berlin that King Edward still desired close co-operation with Germany, but a formal treaty of alliance would undoubtedly meet with opposition in Parliament.[2] The Kaiser at the New Year wrote to his uncle that he too hoped for lasting friendship between their kindred peoples. Both parties must respect and support one another and avoid every measure that might tend to alienate them. But in the concluding sentence of this letter there was a tone of bitter disappointment and, as so often happened with the Kaiser, perhaps unconsciously, a threatening undertone. "May your Government," he writes, "never forget this and never expose me to the danger of being compelled to choose a course which would lead you and us into misfortune."[3]

The alliance was not declined by Germany, as is constantly said. It fell through because England felt she could not acquiesce in the two conditions laid down by Germany—incorporation in the Triple Alliance and immediate sanction by Parliament. We recognise to-day, taught by experience, that in the wreck of these negotiations lies the real cause of the subsequent course of events which led to the founding of the Entente, the encircling of Germany, and the World War. We are prone to charge the leaders of that day with the heavy reproach that they did not show a more accommodating spirit towards the English suitors, for there is a great deal to be said for the view that everything would have turned out very differently had we concluded the alliance: the World War would have been avoided and we perhaps, alongside of England, might have been playing the leading rôle in the world, both politically and economically. It remains to be seen how far such a judgment is justified.

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[1] Metternich, November 26th.

[2] Mühlberg's notes of a conversation with Lascelles, December 27th; cf. Metternich, December 28th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 109, 111).

[3] The Kaiser to King Edward, December 30th, 1901 (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 110).

German statesmen had, as they had three years before, to consider very carefully the advantages and disadvantages of the English offer. It was their duty to find out clearly if the alliance would be a positive benefit to us and above all things give us security against possible military dangers. They now considered that the most likely cause of war for us—a conflict between Russia and Austria on the Eastern question, compelling us sooner or later to declare war on Russia—was not covered by the suggested English agreement ; for if France also attacked, England might say not only that Germany had not been attacked but that she herself had begun war on Russia, although it was in fulfilment of treaty engagements to other Powers. Thus there was the risk that the alliance might fail in the one case where there was serious danger that we might need it. On the other hand, we had to help in the defence of the whole world-wide British Empire, in India too, and in the Far East. They took into consideration also the marked anti-English tone of public opinion which had manifested itself during the Boer War. They reckoned up the fighting strength of Britain and found it was not so great either on land or sea as was generally believed. They asked themselves whether England could effectively support us against a powerful continental Power, whether we might not ultimately have to bear the sacrifices and dangers of a war on two fronts with the Triple Alliance Powers alone, while Great Britain meantime annexed with little difficulty the colonial possessions of the combatants so far as suited her purpose. Behind these various considerations, however, lay a deep distrust in the sincerity of English intentions. The fear that England only wanted to send us against her enemies and then leave us in the lurch as soon as her interests were served, was constantly cropping up. Indeed, there was even a fear lest, if we were robbed of Russia's support, England might ruthlessly use her superiority at sea to benefit herself in colonial matters at our expense. Finally, we were not willing to give up our favourable position between the two groups of hostile Powers by pledging ourselves to the one without positive advantages in return.

Deep down, never clearly defined, perhaps not even clearly felt, there was yet another motive at work. The Kaiser had promised the Czar, when the latter unfolded to him his Far Eastern plans, to cover his rear. Since 1895 our whole policy was dependent on the stability of Russia's position in the Far East. We were bound to Russia by an invisible chain. An alliance with England might easily have brought us into violent conflict with the Kaiser's commitments.

The danger of England coming to an understanding with the Dual Alliance was far from being adequately realised. Holstein thought it absolutely out of the question, and Bülow too, in spite of Hatzfeldt's warnings and occasional doubts of his own, held that there was little likelihood of such an understanding. Their view was rather that England had not the choice of allies and that any attempt of that kind would soon convince her of the impossibility of combining with France and Russia, and that she would then come back to us much more willing to accept our conditions. They imagined that they could safely allow the perception of this fact to dawn gradually upon England without in any way prejudicing German interests. Yet in Berlin the alliance with England was really considered natural and desirable. Even Holstein, who was foremost in his distrust of England and in his hostility to the policy of rescuing Lord Salisbury's "chestnuts," more than once gave expression to this conviction. But it was thought that England was not yet ripe for an alliance, that the right moment had not yet come, and that there was absolutely no danger in delay.

There was a lack of wide outlook shown in constantly interposing into this great debate petty questions of second and third-rate importance such as the South African compensations and the Chinese customs, and in gauging, by the readiness with which these matters were adjusted, the measure of England's good faith and reliability in the question of the alliance. Germany in this instance acted like some peddling tradesman who, before concluding arrangements for the transfer of his business to a large firm, thinks it his duty to ask for a small sum in advance, a precaution which the world-wide firm of Great Britain regarded as an insult and as a sign that their prospective partner was not their equal.

Apart from all this there remains the vital question—would it have been possible and justifiable to have put aside special dangers like the threat of war with Russia, in the hope that an openly negotiated alliance between the strongest naval Power in the world and the strongest military Power would so impress any other state, or even any conceivable coalition of States, that it would dissuade them from attempting the settlement of any disputed question by force of arms? Might not a long term of co-operation, given favourable circumstances for both parties, have created such a strong feeling of solidarity between these two nations, both of Germanic origin, equal in capacity and supplementing one another in their talents, that it would ultimately seem to them natural that they should defend one another, even without the compulsory condition of a written document? Could that much have been expected of England? For a long time past England had been considered an unreliable ally. But it is necessary to remember that in the hour of danger she stood firmly by her later allies, France and Russia. Would she have acted otherwise with Germany?

Two transactions of England's might be regarded as instances of the insincerity of her proposals. First the fruitless overture to Russia in March, 1898, of the terms of which nothing is known. But why should not England, before actually beginning serious negotiations with Germany, see if Russia had nothing to offer? We took a similar precaution. Then again as regards the Windsor Treaty of 1899 with Portugal, it would have been more loyal and prudent not to have concluded it, if England was in earnest about an alliance. But it occurred, as we saw, after the failure of the first overture, at a moment of sharp and almost hostile tension, and it did not run directly counter to her engagements with Germany, though it lent to them a very narrow and unexpected interpretation. It was certainly a matter which gave justifiable cause for distrust.

It is also significant that England approached us the first time after the first German navy bill, and the second time soon after the ratification of the second naval programme in 1900, which provided for the construction of a powerful battle fleet.

But throughout the course of the negotiations the question of the navy was never mentioned, there was no suggestion from the English side of a reduction of our programme nor of delay in carrying it out, much less of bringing it forward as a condition of the conclusion of an alliance. At that time there was no idea of England's supremacy at sea being threatened by the German naval plans. Fears and considerations of this kind only made their appearance later and under very different circumstances. Hence it can scarcely be held that the desire to prevent the construction of a German navy played any appreciable part in the English motives for an alliance. It is possible, indeed, that England's first overture was dictated by political necessity. Russia's restless aggression in the Far East, America's intervention there, the impending clash with France on the Upper Nile, the near prospect of a Boer War, all these things together urged England to seek support from Germany. The general situation was certainly not without influence on Chamberlain's decision, but does that in any way impair the sincerity of England's intentions? Chamberlain at that time did not attempt to disguise the fact that they needed and desired Germany's support temporarily, and he held out the prospect that later on they would render Germany equivalent services if she required them. Moreover, when England renewed her offer in 1901, the dispute with France had been settled in England's favour, relations with America were good, and although the Boer War was not finished, there was no doubt as to its ending victoriously for England. Only the Russian danger in the Far East remained undiminished, but the negotiations for the Anglo-Japanese alliance were already making headway, and offered a prospect of help for England, much more valuable out there than that of Germany. If England again renewed her previous efforts, it could not be from any acute danger or from any urgent necessity for immediate support, but solely from the desire to found a lasting system of alliances which would guarantee the peace of the world and provide a permanent check on those Powers hostile to herself. England's motives cannot be determined with certainty until the official English sources of information are available. Till then it is only possible to speculate as to the reason underlying these repeated overtures. They were probably, in view of the growing Anglo-Russian hostility, due to uneasiness caused by Germany's attitude, as Arbiter of the World, which Bülow already believed she was. Certainly Germany's position between the two groups of Powers was proving both irksome and oppressive. If England was to alter this state of affairs, which might prove very awkward for her, she must have either an alliance with Germany or an understanding with France and Russia. She tried the former way, as it demanded fewer sacrifices and, if successful, would lead to a much safer and more satisfactory result for both parties. It is scarcely a tenable theory that England was not then willing to recognise that obligations were equally binding on both sides, as that would have destroyed the alliance and would have restored the position from which she sought to escape.

It was as natural for the English from their point of view to resist the inclusion of Austria, as it was for Germany for her own interest to insist upon it. She dreaded being compelled not only to defend a State whose collapse was inevitable, but most of all to be bound by Austria's Eastern policy, which, as we know, involved the question of the maintenance of Turkey. Salisbury regarded Turkey also as a State doomed to decay, and had six years previously suggested an understanding as to the disposal of its territories. His aim was to found vigorous and competent Balkan States, able to defend themselves against Russia and to keep the entrance to the Black Sea in their own control. But Austrian statesmen considered this a serious menace to the continued existence of the Danube Monarchy, because these states would be bound to exercise a strong power of attraction on those of kindred race under the Hapsburg sceptre.

It seems fairly certain that in England at this time there were again two parties in the Cabinet. Lord Salisbury wanted a continuation of the policy of a free hand, and if need be, an approach to France. Chamberlain and some of the other Ministers favoured the entente with Germany. But there were serious difficulties. To carry an Anglo-German alliance through Parliament, the Government would have had to advocate it unanimously and, under the circumstances, to have made it a Cabinet question, as opposition was sure to come from Liberal circles, which were by tradition inclined to France. Chamberlain was well aware that those colleagues who differed from him would raise objections as soon as Germany's conditions became known. What these conditions were, we know.

Germany's chances of obtaining the alliance depended on her withdrawing definite claims for help against a double attack, for the inclusion of Austria, and perhaps even for parliamentary sanction. It would certainly have been undertaking a very considerable risk to have entered upon an alliance with England without being secured by treaty against the most likely cause of war. A greater and more far-sighted statesman might nevertheless have attempted it; for all the possibilities cannot be reckoned up in advance and, as it turned out afterwards, the various calculations so carefully worked out at Berlin contained a whole series of the grossest mistakes.

The most dangerous of these was undoubtedly the disregard of Hatzfeldt's warning as to the possibility of England coming to an understanding with the Dual Alliance, and our thinking that we could therefore safely wait because England would be forced to fall back on us and accept our conditions. This fundamental misreading of the situation was the source of the worst mistakes in our policy. On the other hand, we believed that we had the free choice of allies. Through the friendly development of our relations with Russia and the temporary moderation of the Russians in Balkan questions, we were led into underestimating the two insurmountable obstacles to a Continental League, the Alsace-Lorraine problem and the Austro-Russian rivalry in the Balkans. As a matter of fact it was Germany who had lost the choice of allies—at least so long as she was not prepared to sacrifice the Triple Alliance and throw in her lot, at Austria's expense, entirely with Russia. Such a course, however, was far from the thoughts of our statesmen. We were also mistaken in our estimate of the dangers to be apprehended from possible opponents. A war on two fronts, against France and Russia, onerous and costly as it would be, offered much greater chances of victory and threatened our industrial life far less than a struggle with England, who was bound to destroy our foreign trade at the very outset and afforded us scant opportunities of dealing her a vital blow. We ignored then what we had sometimes realised, that unlike England we could neither increase our colonial empire in time of war nor even defend it. Starting from these false premises it was impossible for the astute reckoners in Berlin, with all their shrewdness, to reach a just conclusion. They failed to realise here the relative unimportance of calculating chances and circumstances. The old bureaucratic habits led them to exaggerate the value of the written word. After all, does the value of a great general political alliance between modern peoples and governments depend actually and vitally on the refinements of well-thought-out formulae? Where it is a question of definite conditions, limitations of boundaries, or specific services of any kind, then certainly it is necessary to have the text of the treaty drawn up in clear terms which exclude what is vague and misleading. But great political understandings such as are now called "ententes" depend only on the firm will to hold together. Where that exists, its application to individual cases develops naturally; where it does not exist, no paragraphs in a treaty can take its place. The Franco-Russian alliance, later on the Anglo-Japanese and the Anglo-Franco-Russian alliances were all founded on an understanding between the Governments, ratified by public opinion in these countries, while the text of the treaties, so far as it existed and was not concerned with special matters, was couched in general terms and was almost non-committal. Chamberlain wanted an entente of that kind which might gradually grow stronger and become a vital element in the life of both nations. But we thought that too vague and dangerous, and wanted a treaty covering every possible contingency incorporated with judicial precision in the paragraphs of the text. The English, on the other hand, considered this unsafe, pedantic and unpractical, and held aloof. This rigid adherence to the written word blocked our outlook into the world of facts. Public opinion in both countries had first to be won over, and that should not have proved too hard a task. The general opinion among observers was that England had become much more friendly to Germany, and was not yet affected by the spectre of the German peril, nor by fear of the German navy threatening England's supremacy at sea. During the first period of the Boer War the feeling in Germany was bitterly hostile to England, but there never was any really constructive and intelligent public opinion in our country in regard to foreign policy. Judicious action on the part of the Government and of the parties co-operating with them would soon have won over a majority to their way of thinking.

In trying by means of carefully balanced paragraphs to escape the danger of being exploited by England and then left in the lurch, our political leaders conjured up the far greater peril of driving our natural allies into the arms of our opponents and leaving ourselves isolated. Yet they constantly cherished the conviction that they had acted wisely because England must and would eventually return. Bülow declared,[1] "We ought not to show any uneasiness nor anxious haste but just leave hope shimmering on the horizon. In this hope lies our surest protection against England capitulating to Russia." It is hard to understand how he could believe that the English would remain satisfied for long with the mere hope of a German alliance. They had offered us their hand and had withdrawn it when we made the conditions of acceptance too onerous for fulfilment. They never came back to us. They went instead to our enemies. Ours was the fate of which the poet speaks,[2]

> "Was man von der Minute ausgeschlagen,
> Giebt keine Ewigkeit zurück!"

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[1] Marginal comment on Holstein's note to him on November 1st, 1901 (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 109).

[2] "What thou hast rejected in a moment of Time,
Eternity cannot restore." (Schiller's *Resignation*.)

## VIII. THE ANGLO-FRENCH ENTENTE

THE negotiations between Berlin and London were watched by Paris and St. Petersburg with jealous and suspicious interest, as was natural. They could hardly have found out the actual details, but they feared the worst. The visit of the Russian fleet to Toulon in April, 1901, was intended as a manifestation to the world of the solidarity of the Dual Alliance, and Delcassé's visit to St. Petersburg at the end of the same month was certainly due to the desire to talk over the threatening change for the worse in the political situation. We have already noticed the attempt to sow distrust between England and Germany. The Czar's journey to Paris in the beginning of September and the announcement of his visit to the Kaiser roused in King Edward's mind suspicions of far-reaching anti-English plans. On September 11th the Czar Nicolas II. reached the West Prussian seaboard near Danzig and was present at the German naval manœuvres. Count Lamsdorff and Count Bülow were also there. The political situation was discussed on the basis of a memorandum drafted by Holstein; the absence of conflicting interests was established, and the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Near East was agreed upon. On the German side attention was drawn to the peaceful and purely defensive character of the Triple Alliance and to the unreliable nature of English policy which fomented friction between the Continental Powers. Germany also affirmed that her aims in Asia Minor were purely economic and that the participation of Russian capital in the Bagdad railway would be very welcome. Count Lamsdorff maintained that if Russia and Germany stood together, the peace of the world was assured; a real alliance ought to be aimed at and would prove a fruitful blessing. The Czar expressed the view that the idea of a continental federation probably belonged to the future; it must be allowed to ripen. He himself would do his utmost to help towards the realisation of this great idea. Both of them coming direct from Paris were evidently anxious to create the impression that the French too might gradually be won over to this idea.[1]

The Russian attitude gave great satisfaction in Berlin and was regarded as a success for the policy hitherto pursued. They felt it was unlikely that the Russians would have been so accommodating towards them "had not the good relations with England raised our prestige in their eyes."[2] From London Metternich wrote advising them, as the prospect of an English alliance was getting more and more remote, to profit by Russia's present mood to strengthen the ties with her. "To keep tacking between the two cannot continue indefinitely."[3] Of course they had also noticed in St. Petersburg the decline in the Anglo-German friendship in the late autumn. They resolved to use the opportunity for a fresh effort, probably to find out how the land lay. At the end of October Russia inquired at Berlin as to Germany's views with regard to intervention in the still smouldering South African War and suggested that the Powers might perhaps offer their good services, with the reminder that the English conduct of the war did not conform to the Rules of the Hague Convention. Holstein felt that Russia was only waiting to be able to say in England that Germany favoured intervention, in order to obtain concessions in the Far East and in Persia. Hence, on his advice, a reply was sent stating that Germany was everywhere anxious to help towards avoiding wars or bringing them to an end, but was afraid that in this instance such a step would have a disturbing influence; even the suspicion of a threat would only increase England's obstinacy; but if Russia alone offered her good services, the move would not be so easily liable to misconstruction. Owing to the fear of English indiscretions at St. Petersburg this reply was not communicated to London.[4]

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[1] Two memorandums of Holstein's of August 10th and explanatory letter to Bülow; special copy for the Kaiser, September 7th. Bülow's notes on the conversations, September 14th (*Grosse Politik*, xviii. 20, 29).

[2] Bülow to the Foreign Office, September 16th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 98).

[3] Metternich, September 13th (included in Bülow's letter of September 16th).

[4] Holstein's note, October 25th. Reply to Russia, October 29th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 190, 192).

On January 30th, 1902, an alliance was signed between England and Japan. Its aim was to maintain the integrity of China and Korea, but both participants bound themselves to benevolent neutrality in any war in which one of them was engaged and to active participation if a further Power joined with the opponent of one of the allies. These were on the whole the same conditions as English statesmen had in their minds for the alliance with Germany.

This treaty put an end to England's isolation, at least in Far Eastern questions. Her traditional policy to keep free from alliances had been abandoned so far, though certainly in favour of a Power which in the event of war would need support at sea but not on land, and which was not likely to be entangled in European quarrels.

This alliance was extremely unwelcome to the French and the Russians, and for the time being increased the opposition between England and the Dual Alliance. In Berlin it was hailed with delight, and even described as "the one gleam of light" in the present situation, because they imagined that England and Russia would thereby be irrevocably alienated. Besides, England could only benefit by it if she were on good terms with Germany. Bülow declared that they would gradually come to recognise that a powerful Germany was as important to Great Britain as a powerful England was to us.[1] To St. Petersburg, nevertheless, word was sent that we had had no hand in this treaty nor were we secret partners in it, so that the Czar's confidence in the Kaiser's loyalty should not be shaken.[2]

Russia now approached Germany with a definite proposal to renew and regulate by a firm agreement the previous co-operation with the Dual Alliance in the Far East which had been attended with such good results in 1895—in other words an opposition alliance to England and Japan in the Far East. Baron Osten-Sacken went so far as to say in Berlin that the idea of a "revanche" had been absolutely given up in France; furthermore, Russia would never allow France to attack Germany; she had complete control of French policy no matter what scurvy politician was in power. Nor could France venture further in her approach to England than Russia allowed. Nevertheless this overture was rejected at Berlin. Such an alliance would have cost us the Japanese market and have driven the other two Powers into co-operation with America, which would not have been profitable for Russia herself. Count Lamsdorff was furious and declared that if Russian proposals met with so little understanding from Germany, Russia in future would go her own road; he also expressed the suspicion that Germany had bound herself to England in some form or other, which Bülow denied with an air of injured innocence.[1]

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[1] Note of February 23rd, 1902. Bülow to Metternich, March 13th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 149).

[2] Bülow to Alvensleben, February 14th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 156).

The upshot of these Russian counter-moves was, as is well known, the open announcement that the Franco-Russian alliance was valid also in the Far East, although in so vague a form that later on France was able to remain neutral in the Russo-Japanese War.[2] Nevertheless, Russia immediately promised the Chinese to evacuate Manchuria as soon as peace was restored. Germany had already told both the Russians and the Japanese that we would remain neutral in the event of a war in the Far East, so long as these states alone were involved. There was no intention of going further at present. In the event of France joining the combatants, Holstein declared we must have an absolutely free hand, so as to prevent France increasing her power in the Far East and England claiming our support in virtue of the terms of the Yangtse Agreement. But his main contention was that we must retain the possibility "of being able to ask for adequate compensations, not only for possible support but even for preserving neutrality."[3] The Kaiser sent word to the Czar that he must have a free hand both on sea and on land in order to cover his rear in Europe. His fleet was too small to engage it in Asia with any prospect of success. He could aid the Czar much more effectively in Europe. There was no necessity for written documents on the matter; the Czar could rely absolutely on him. Bülow was satisfied with these statements; he believed that the Czar's confidence in the Kaiser was "the soundest pillar of the peace of the world and the best card in our political game."[1]

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[1] Alvensleben, February 19th. Despatch to Alvensleben, February 22nd, Bülow's record of a conversation with Osten-Sacken, February 25th. Alvensleben, March 2nd. Despatchès to Alvensleben, March 9th and 17th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 156-177).

[2] Communicated by the French and Russian Ambassadors in Berlin on March 19th. Note of March 19th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 179).

[3] Holstein's memorandum, March 24th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 3).

Somewhat later nevertheless the Russians sought to obtain a firm agreement for aid from Germany. They contended that in 1897, on the settlement of the Kiau-Chou question, the Kaiser and Bülow had held out the prospect of more than mere neutrality in the event of war in the Far East. On the German side they would not admit this. The fact was that protection for the rear had only been promised in a general sense, the immediate instance being conditional on the Russians being disputed the possession of Port Arthur; no direct support had ever been promised for Russian measures for the occupation and retention of Manchuria or Korea. Nevertheless, the Kaiser's promises, which had never been officially stated, were so indefinite that the Russian statements were not unreasonable. Holstein declared that Russia would easily deal with the Japanese single-handed and that the other Powers were not likely to intervene. He strongly discountenanced any encouragement of Franco-Russian plans of conquest which would bring us into sharp conflict with England, Japan and America, and might possibly lead to a world-wide conflagration in which Germany would have nothing to gain and could only be a loser, for a war of that kind would be fought principally at sea and would inflict the gravest injury on German commerce.

Germany therefore declined the Russian alliance and certainly for better reasons than could be alleged for the rejection of the English negotiations. We wished to remain free. Russia and England, Bülow declared, were both wanting to harness us to their wagons without any service in return.

All the more importance was now attached to the timely renewal of the Triple Alliance, which expired in the summer of 1902. It was by no means certain that the renewal would be easy. For years past Italy had been steadily drawing nearer to France. In 1898 the ten years' tariff war between the two countries had ended in a treaty of commerce, and after the assassination of King Humbert, who was friendly to Germany, and the accession of Victor Emmanuel II. (July 29th, 1900), things moved at a quicker pace. In December, 1900, an agreement was reached on the North African question. Italy recognised Morocco, and France Tripoli, as lying outside her own sphere of interests, and Italy had stipulated that she might go forward in Tripoli, as soon as France changed the territorial or political position in Morocco.[1] It was only a year later that Germany learned of this agreement through her ally.[2] In April, 1901, a visit of the Italian fleet to Toulon gave outward expression to the new friendship.

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[1] Report of the Kaiser of a conversation with the Russian naval attaché, April 3rd. Bülow to the Kaiser, April 5th. Shortly before he had written to Metternich (March 13th), "H.M. is far and away our best card against England" (*Grosse Politik*, xviii. 47. *Ibid.* xvii. 151).

In January, 1902, when the negotiations for the extension of the Triple Alliance began, the Italian Minister, Prinetti, wished to recognise the new friendly relations with France by the addition of a clause to the effect that "Italy had undertaken no engagements that could prove dangerous to France." Furthermore, he wanted Austria's sanction for the occupation of Tripoli and her renunciation of her recent acquisitions in the Balkan Peninsula to be expressed in definite terms. Finally, he sought to bind Germany to the unconditional maintenance of the *status quo* in the Near East, in other words, the defence of the Straits against Russia.

In Vienna and Berlin every alteration in the original text of the treaty was refused. The German Government dreaded lest France should be immediately notified of their new engagements with regard to the Near East and that Paris would then send word to the Russians that it was the Triple Alliance that wished to hinder them from reaching Constantinople. Prinetti had nevertheless said that Germany could at any time check a Russian advance on Constantinople by a mobilisation on her Eastern frontier. It was not till the beginning of May that Italy consented to the extension of the treaty, without any alteration of text, for six years, and then, if no notice were given, to its renewal for a further period of equal duration. Austria, on the other hand, in a special declaration undertook not to oppose Italy's undertakings in Tripoli. The formal renewal of the treaty only took place on June 28th.[1] Germany had succeeded in avoiding any extension of her obligations in the Near East so as to remain in the second line there as before. At Monza in 1897 the leading statesmen of Austria and Italy had come to an agreement about Albania, which was confirmed by an exchange of notes in December, 1900, according to which the existing situation was to be maintained as long as possible, and when this could no longer be done the two Powers were then to endeavour to obtain autonomy for Albania.[2] Italy desired not merely to insert this declaration in the treaty of the Triple Alliance but to extend its application to the various European portions of the Turkish Empire. Austria had declined a similar settlement with regard to further Balkan possibilities, but she had admitted the obligation in the case of Albania.

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[1] Cf. the French Foreign Office's *Documents diplomatiques*, "Les accords franco-italiens de 1900-1902" (1920).

[2] Count Wedel, December 12th, 1901 (*Grosse Politik*, xviii. 717).

The Triple Alliance was thus once more wind and weather tight. There was no doubt, however, that its value had been seriously affected by Italy's close approach to France and that Italy's attitude would become even more serious in the event of Germany's relations with England growing worse. Their satisfaction in Berlin and Vienna would have been considerably damped had they known of the further steps that Italy had taken.

As soon as the renewal of the Triple Alliance was completed Prinetti sent written notice to Paris that it contained nothing either directly or indirectly aggressive towards France or which bound Italy to take part in any attack against France or to threaten her security and peace. Supplementary treaties such as were talked about, which modified the purely defensive character of the Triple Alliance, simply did not exist (June 4th). On November 1st, 1902, by an exchange of notes a treaty was concluded giving France a free hand in Morocco and Italy the same in Tripoli, and binding both Powers to strict neutrality in the event of either of them being attacked by one or more opponents. It would be considered an attack if the Power in question "saw itself compelled as a result of direct provocation, to seize the initiative by declaring war in order to protect its honour and safety." But this intention must previously be submitted to the other Government so that the latter could judge if there were actual provocation. Both Powers promised that no military agreements existed nor would be concluded which conflicted with these engagements.[1] If these stipulations did not actually run counter to the terms of the Triple Alliance treaties, they nevertheless allowed France to feel that at the critical moment she might succeed in detaching Italy from Germany's side in the struggle.

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[1] For full information *vide* the Austrian documents in Pribram, i. 247 f. Also the German documents in *Grosse Politik*, xviii. 501-610. At Austria's request, in a protocol of June 1st, 1902, it was expressly stated that the German-Austrian Treaty of 1876 still held good, as well as the Triple Alliance, and would be renewed automatically every three years, unless notice of termination were given by one side.

[2] Pribram, i. 83.

The negotiations for the renewal of the Triple Alliance had shown Germany once more how keen was Italy's desire to occupy Tripoli. In this she rightly saw a serious danger to the cause of peace. Whereas the policy of Germany, Austria and Russia (in spite of the latter's commitments in the Far East) was directed towards upholding the integrity of Turkey as long as possible so as to avoid opening up the dangerous problem of the Balkans, Italy, to all appearances, was simply waiting for the moment when Turkey was involved in difficulties in some other place in order to fall upon Tripoli. It was believed in Berlin that Montenegro's armaments were really due to Italian instigation, for though the Great Powers had once again allayed the unrest in Macedonia, Montenegro would willingly have exploited it to extend her own territory. It was also believed that France knew what was happening, and that if there was a break up in the Balkans and all the Powers were involved there, she hoped to secure Morocco. They believed besides that France was seeking to kindle the suspicion in St. Petersburg and Constantinople that Germany was goading Italy on to this line of policy so distasteful to Russia and Turkey.[2] Possibly Holstein's suspicious nature led him to view the intentions of France and Italy in too sombre colours. In any case while his vigilant eye spied these possible but remote perils he overlooked the actual and imminent danger of an understanding between England and France whereby not merely the fate of North Africa would be decided but the face of the political world would be completely transformed.

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[1] Cf. the French publications already quoted.

[2] Holstein's memorandun of April 30th, 1902 (*Grosse Politik*, xviii. 753).

There can be no doubt that as soon as Chamberlain felt that the negotiations with Germany had failed, he began to negotiate with France for the removal of the remaining causes of dispute in colonial matters. In January, 1902, news of this reached Berlin.[1] From French sources we know that the Czar in a private letter to President Loubet advised him to seek an agreement.[2] At first, however, small progress was made. Morocco was the stumbling-block. It had been becoming increasingly clear of late years that France was here seeking a dominant position. The English were not ignorant of the fact that France had been busily negotiating with Spain over a delimitation of the spheres of interest in Morocco. From Chamberlain's remarks during the negotiations for the treaty, it is quite evident that England would have liked the northern portion of Morocco with Tangier for herself, in order to control the Straits of Gibraltar the more securely. To strengthen the hands of France, her strongest naval competitor in the Mediterranean, just at this spot, was certainly not desirable for England. When it was known in Berlin in the summer of 1902 that England was willing to leave Morocco, with the exception of Tangier and a strip of the Atlantic seaboard, to France, the news seemed hardly credible.[3] There was yet a third Power keenly interested in Morocco—Spain. The French Government was now negotiating with it, and in November, 1902, the draft of a treaty was agreed upon. Just at that time serious disturbances had broken out in Morocco and the Sultan had not been able to assert his authority. European officials were planning measures for the protection of their fellow-countrymen and Spain had troops and ships in readiness for action. According to the treaty, North Morocco with Tangier and Fez was recognised as the Spanish sphere of interest, and South Morocco with Marakesh as the French sphere.

But before the treaty had been finally ratified a change of Ministry took place in Spain. The new Cabinet was afraid of difficulties with England and communicated the draft of the treaty to London. The English Government at once vetoed the proposal, whereupon Spain refused ratification. Probably at this time England was still hoping to take Tangier for herself.[1] In any case there was no longer any thought, as formerly, of leaving Germany a share. In September, 1902, at an interview with Eckardstein, Chamberlain said he had quite given up his earlier plans for an alliance, as Germany for the time being was apparently convinced that she would gradually succeed in bringing down England and her colonial empire, and in taking possession of the whole inheritance for herself. Hatred of Germany had increased to such an extent in England that no Ministry however strong could afford to disregard it. Any provocation from Germany might lead to war, which he personally would consider a misfortune for both countries. England in any case could always find allies : here he was plainly hinting at France. With the leaders of the Liberal opposition, Rosebery, Asquith and Grey, Eckardstein found a strong inclination towards an understanding with France and Russia, in spite of the sacrifices involved.[2] When the Kaiser came to London in November, 1902, matters had not improved. Chamberlain was deeply offended, feeling that he had been both duped and insulted. With Balfour the Kaiser talked about Germany's need for a navy which would contribute powerfully to strengthen the feeling of unity in the mosaic of the empire but was not intended for attacking others. " A couple of palm trees more or less in the tropics is a matter of indifference to me." Given the right spirit all colonial differences would be easily settled. Lansdowne, however, did not get a favourable hearing from the Kaiser for his treatment of the Dardanelles problem. In September Russia had requested permission from the Porte for the passage of some torpedo boats from the Aegean to the Black Sea and had been granted it after some difficulty. In England's opinion this was counter to the spirit of the existing treaties. It opened up once more the old question whether the closing of the Straits to warships was an inviolable principle binding also upon the Sultan, or whether the passage was only denied when it was against the

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[1] Metternich, January 30th, 1902 (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 342).

[2] *Rapport*, 314.

[3] Richthofen to Eckardstein, September 25th. Eckardstein, October 4th (2, 401 f.) (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 345).

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[1] There is a lack of reliable authority for all these proceedings. One is referred to the not always trustworthy indiscretions of the *Libre Parole* and the *Figaro* of 1901.

[2] Eckardstein, September 14th and 17th, 1902 (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 221).

Sultan's wish. England upheld the former view, Russia the latter. The Kaiser took up the position that the Sultan, as sovereign of the territory, had always the right to grant the passage. There had also been differences of opinion about the evacuation of Shanghai by the European troops, so that feeling had evidently run pretty high. The Kaiser declared that the vast superiority of the English fleet made great patience and prudence necessary.[1]

The more our relations with England declined, the closer we drew to Russia. Although in the spring Berlin had refused to renew the triple league in the Far East with Russia and France, the Kaiser himself, who was accompanied by Bülow, again brought up the solidarity of Continental interests when he met the Czar at Reval in August. Their two fleets might be regarded as one great organisation belonging to one great continent; as rulers of the two leading Powers of the two great combinations of states, they were always in the position to discuss and settle all important problems and then influence their allies to accept the same point of view. These five Powers acting together were at any time competent to maintain the peace of the world. Although in the first instance he was referring to the Yellow Peril, yet he had undoubtedly at the back of his mind the defence of Continental interests against England. Before leaving for London in November the Kaiser informed the Czar that he would call King Edward's attention to the community of interests of the five Continental Powers, at which the Czar, of course, expressed his warm approval. In the spring of 1903, when news came in more and more frequently of repeated negotiations between France and England, when even the Russian Ambassador expressed his uneasiness at the growing Anglo-French intimacy, Berlin still remained free from anxiety, and Holstein declared with unshaken confidence that an understanding between the Western Powers was a mere figment of the imagination. That could only be realised if France abandoned her idea of revenge. Till then France could not dispense with Russia's support, as it was only with Russia's help—not England's—that she could hope to resist a German attack.[1] On the other hand, Bülow cherished the hope that, owing to the antagonism between Russia and England in the Far East, the French intimacy with England might lead to a coolness between Russia and France and possibly even to a dissolution of the Dual Alliance. In that case the old league of the Three Emperors, dissolved in 1887, might possibly be revived; for to all Conservatives and to Bülow also it seemed the right alliance, naturally and historically, for Germany. With this pleasant prospect *in petto* they felt in Berlin they might continue their policy as hitherto with an easy conscience. They could "hardly take things too coolly," Bülow declared. Even when King Edward visited Paris in the spring of 1903 and was given an extremely cordial welcome, not only by the Government but also by the populace, he did not change his views. He thought the festivities in Paris were a sign that France would not support Russia against England in the Far East; she would thereby annoy Russia and drive her nearer to Germany.[2] Nevertheless, in May Eckardstein wrote from London that the negotiations about Morocco seemed to be making progress. Also banking circles, so important in France, were in favour of an understanding with England. They were tired of being called upon to meet Russia's ever-growing demands for loans and wished to interest the money market in London, which had hitherto held aloof, in the financing of Russia. Hence it was scarcely likely that the success of these efforts would weaken the Dual Alliance; on the contrary, there was the dangerous possibility, if the plan succeeded, of the emergence of a new and, for Germany, very dangerous Triple Alliance founded on a community of both political and economic interests. The Imperial Chancellor laid this information before the Kaiser and requested the opinions of the Ambassadors in Paris and St. Petersburg. But when the latter declared that they considered there was no likelihood of such fears being realised for a long time to come, he felt reassured, all the more as he himself did not believe that Russia would find her interests served by such an alliance either in the Far or the Near East. The London

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[1] Metternich, November 9th and 17th. The Kaiser to Bülow, November 12th. Bülow to the Kaiser, November 13th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 115, 117; xviii. 437, 438).

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[1] Holstein to Bülow, March 30th, 1903.

[2] Bülow to the Foreign Office, April 3rd and 15th, 1903 (*Grosse Politik*, xviii. 839).

Ambassador did not believe in such a possibility, England having hitherto refused all continental alliances, and having too little to gain by it. England might possibly come to terms with France on isolated colonial disputes so as to have one opponent the less in the world; but even then she would have no cause to fall foul of Germany. The Kaiser felt completely reassured by these statements.[1]

In July, 1903, the English Parliament sanctioned a grant for the formation of a Home Fleet in the North Sea and for the construction of a large naval harbour at Rosyth in the Firth of Forth. For the first time English naval dispositions based their front towards Germany instead of towards France and Russia. The estrangement of English policy from Germany was complete.

In view of England's attitude, Holstein was afraid lest the Kaiser should wish to ally himself more closely with Russia and he again warned him against doing so. Such a treaty would only be profitable to Russia, who, covered by Germany, could then occupy any territory she coveted from Skutari to Korea, whereas Germany in any attempt at colonial expansion would come into conflict with England and America. A war of the Continental Powers against England was unthinkable, for neither France, Italy, nor Austria would co-operate. Russia, therefore, would be free to plunder, and we might be thankful if the covering of her rear, which we had promised her, did not involve us in a world war. It would take years before our navy was strong enough, along with Russia, to fight England and America with any prospect of success. The only way to avoid this danger was to wait quietly; even the appearance of being tied to Russia was not desirable, all the more so as the Czar, out of consideration for France, was not likely to undertake to guarantee our present possessions. "Time is in our favour, and our present situation, made difficult by general distrust, will improve, provided we do not, either actually or apparently, commit ourselves prematurely, *i.e.* before the prospect of some German advantage has appeared."[2]

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[1] Eckardstein's report in his memoirs, 2. 422. Despatch to Alvensleben, May 13th. Bülow to the Kaiser, May 20th. Metternich, June 2nd, 1903 (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 567, 590).

[2] Holstein's memorandum of April 16th, 1903 (*Grosse Politik*, xviii. 68).

Only a short time before Germany had felt herself to be *arbiter mundi*, but that feeling was gradually disappearing and being replaced by one of great caution.

The difficulty of the situation was further enhanced by the extraordinarily threatening development of events in the Balkan Peninsula. The unrest in Macedonia continued unabated; it was fomented from Bulgaria, where Prince Ferdinand considered the time had arrived for shaking off the Turkish yoke and founding a great Bulgarian empire. He had thrown in his lot definitely with Russia, and in 1902 had received Russia's guarantee for his security of tenure in return for the promise of military aid against any of the Triple Alliance Powers, and had concluded a military convention with the Czar.[1] From Vienna and St. Petersburg the Sultan was urgently advised to carry out extensive reforms. Macedonia ought not to be allowed to separate from the Turkish union of States, but should instead be made an almost autonomous province under a governor to be appointed by the Porte, and subject to the approval of the Great Powers; and the taxes levied there should without fail be devoted to the needs of the province itself. England had not agreed to these proposals for reforms which she considered useless; she even considered the permanent maintenance of Turkey to be impossible, and the most welcome solution to be the complete independence of Macedonia or its dismemberment among the Balkan States. Under pressure from the other Powers, the Sultan reluctantly accepted their programme, but he did little of positive value to help the Governor, Hilmi Pasha, in his heavy task. Armed bands continued their depredations with undiminished vigour. Bulgaria began to arm and to prepare to attack.

Meanwhile the spirit of revolt had spread to Serbia and Greece. Macedonia had long been an apple of discord among these three Balkan States. At any moment a war might break out here with incalculable consequences. Italy would then be certain to invade Tripoli immediately, and the probability was that France would proceed against Morocco. The situation was rendered more uncertain by the shocking crime at Belgrade on June 11th, 1903, when King Alexander II. was murdered by his officers, and the Pretender, Peter Karageorgevitch, who was cognisant of the whole conspiracy, was placed on the throne by the murderers. No one knew what course the foreign policy of the new ruler would take, whether like his predecessor he would be friendly to Russia or whether he would seek support from Austria. The one thing certain was that a Government resting on such a foundation would require exceptional popularity. How could it better obtain this than by doing something for its brothers in Macedonia suffering under the yoke of Turkey? In the meantime, however, the new King was boycotted by the majority of the Great Powers, and towards the end of the year all the Ambassadors except the French had left Belgrade.

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[1] Documents in the Russian secret archives, No. 12.

On September 18th, when the Kaiser visited the Emperor Francis Joseph in Vienna, the problem of the Near East was exhaustively discussed by Bülow and Goluchowski. The Austrian Minister made it perfectly clear that the maintenance of Turkey was still the aim of their policy. He declared he could not consent to divide up the Balkan Peninsula between Austria and Russia as that held within it the germ of war. They did not believe in Vienna that Russia would carry out such an arrangement honestly. Nor would Goluchowski consent to a great Serbian or a great Montenegrin State, and he was even less willing that Constantinople should fall to Russia. It would no longer be possible to govern Austria, as she would be disintegrated by the centrifugal Slav elements. Rather than that he would appeal to the sword. The best solution seemed to him to be to partition Turkey gradually in such a way that Greece, Bulgaria, and Roumania should be considerably increased, Serbia and Montenegro kept small, and Albania made an independent State. In the last country Italy ought to cease agitation. The possibility of closer relations with Russia owing to the weakening or dissolution of the Triple Alliance he put aside entirely as madness, and the first step to dismemberment, or vassaldom; he would never draw closer to Russia than the relations with Germany allowed. On the other hand, he welcomed the idea of a revival of the old League of the Three Emperors.[1] It is quite evident that Goluchowski in his heart did not believe that it would be possible to maintain Turkey's position in

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[1] Bülow's note, September 20th, 1903. Cf. the report of the German chargé d'affairs in St. Petersburg on conversations with the Austrian Ambassador there, Baron Aehrenthal, September 14th (*Grosse Politik*, xviii. 355).

Europe permanently. But he did not wish to discuss at present the form of partitioning the inheritance which he favoured, as he dreaded not merely the embittered opposition of Serbia and Montenegro, but also of their protector the Czar, with whom it was desirable to remain on good terms as long as possible. Then, too, the proposed increase for their Roumanian ally could only be obtained at the expense of Bulgaria, but it was extremely doubtful if even extensive acquisitions in Macedonia would make Sofia willing to surrender territories possessing Bulgarian populations to its northern neighbour; hence the desire to maintain the *status quo* by every practicable means. It was just the old shuffling policy, afraid of possible developments.

Now, however, Russia's interests also prompted her to postpone a solution of the Balkan problem. The prospect of an armed conflict with Japan in the Far East was steadily approaching, although it was not realised how near it was. More than ever, then, Russia needed a free hand in Asia, where she had decided not to evacuate Manchuria at the end of 1903 as promised, and to establish herself permanently in Korea. Hence the Czar and his advisers came to an agreement with Austria which was duly signed at the Jagdschloss of Mürzsteg on the occasion of the Czar's visit to Vienna on October 3rd. Its leading provisions were that both Powers should prevent territorial changes as long as possible and should compel Turkey to carry through the reforms in Macedonia as sanctioned by the other Great Powers, and that these should be supervised by a Russian and an Austrian Commissioner in addition to the Governor. Furthermore, a Macedonian gendarmerie was to be formed under European officers to restore order throughout the country. The Sultan was virtually compelled to accept these demands owing to the strong pressure of the two neighbouring Powers zealously supported by Germany. The Prince of Bulgaria, on strict orders from St. Petersburg, was obliged to disarm, and once more the danger of war was averted. But the harmony between Vienna and St. Petersburg was merely in appearance. The Austrians knew only too well that as soon as the dismemberment of Turkey in Europe began in earnest hostilities would break out.

Shortly after this, on November 4th, the Czar and the Kaiser met at Wiesbaden. Bülow had warned the Kaiser that Russian overtures were probable, in order to alarm France and render her more compliant, and also in order to gain Germany's support in the event of a conflict with Japan. He advised a conciliatory but non-committal answer, emphasising the fact that Germany, in the event of a war in the Far East, must remain a neutral spectator unless the intervention of other Powers produced a new situation. That would probably suffice and save the Kaiser from raising the ticklish question of a guarantee as the price of actual co-operation. The Kaiser himself rightly judged that Russia had altogether discarded the idea of a revival of the League of the Three Emperors, still held by many Austrian statesmen, among others by Baron Aehrenthal, the Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg. On the other hand, he believed that Italy's leaning to the Western Powers endangered the stability of the Triple Alliance. He no longer considered the formation of a general coalition against Germany as improbable, and he realised that great caution was necessary. He promised " not to give any assurances to the Czar unless on the basis of complete reciprocity and mutual guarantees."

The effect of the interview was satisfactory. Count Lamsdorff and the Czar affirmed that they would be satisfied if the Sultan carried through the Mürzsteg programme, as they did not want a war in the Balkans. The Czar expressed his abhorrence of the spread of democracy and irreligion in France, and declared he must maintain his influence there so as to prevent France going over to England. He was afraid that if war broke out with Japan, England would at once go to the rescue of Japan. The Kaiser, however, held that England would only do so if France were to help Russia, as the terms of the treaty would only then become operative. He gave no definite promises of active support for Russia.[1]

The political horizon clouded over as the threat of war in the Far East grew more imminent. The Czar would willingly have avoided it, yet he constantly agreed to measures which were bound to offend Japanese susceptibilities. Like the majority of European politicians, he had believed up to the last minute that

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[1] Bülow to the Emperor, October 19th. Bülow to Holstein, October 31st. Note of November 7th, with corrections by the Kaiser, and circular letter of November 14th. *Vide* also the Kaiser's comments on the report of September 14th referred to above (*Grosse Politik*, xviii. 847, 853, 70, 78, 355).

Japan would not risk the conflict. But in Tokio, by the end of November, they were already firmly resolved on war, believing that armed conflict with Russia was unavoidable and realising that once the Trans-Siberian railway was finished it would be much more dangerous for Japan.

The impending war made its influence felt also on the course of the Anglo-French negotiations. It was known in Berlin that King Edward, on his visit to Paris in May, had advised the French to keep out of the fighting, as he also wished and meant to do. Evidently then or soon afterwards definite arrangements were made for this purpose. By an agreement of October 14th, England and France undertook to submit to the decision of the Hague Tribunal all disputed matters not affecting their vital interests. In order to clear from the path all sources of friction which might cause strife between them while their respective allies were at war, an earnest attempt was now made to settle the Morocco problem. In August Lord Lansdowne declined the French proposals.[1] But he must shortly afterwards have made up his mind to accept a solution on the basis subsequently agreed upon. France was not to receive the Mediterranean seaboard of Morocco and Tangier, nor was England to take possession of them; they were to be left to Spain. When in Vienna in September, 1903, Bülow learned from the Queen of Spain, who was there on a visit, that the principal features of the treaty of demarcation with France had already been prepared. He at once instituted enquiries in Spain as to whether Germany was to receive a share or compensation, but received merely courteous but inconclusive answers.[2] In November Lansdowne remarked to Metternich that France, as a neighbouring Power, could not be prevented from acquiring gradually the preponderating influence in Morocco. But it was only in February, 1904, when the war in the East had actually broken out, that the negotiations reached a conclusion.

It is not possible here to enter into the origin of this great war, the significance of which will appear later on. In England they had for a long time past been fully cognisant of Japan's intentions. When at the last moment the Czar appealed to England to intervene and declared his readiness to grant all Japan's demands, they refused in London to make the attempt, alleging that it was too late.[1] They knew that Japan wanted to fight and they were careful not to impede her movements. England's vaunted love of peace was not great enough to induce her statesmen to prevent wars in the course of which they might expect considerable advantages for their own country without any risk to themselves. England's attitude was a bitter disappointment to the Czar. In Germany too we had seen the war coming for a long time past, but were doubtful to the very end if it would actually break out. On the whole it was considered favourable to our interests, as it would strengthen Russia's position in Asia, which was one of our principal aims, and it would deprive France for some time to come of Russia's help in a war of revenge. Germany was resolved to remain neutral, but left nothing undone to strengthen the Czar in his decision not to yield. The Kaiser wrote to him that he took it for granted that Russia would have both Manchuria and Korea.[2] Personally he was indignant at the Czar's vacillation and weakness ; he ought from Moscow to have summoned the Russian people to a Holy War against the Yellow Race. His failure to do so was prejudicial to the monarchical principle. Bülow had difficulty in convincing his master that any upbraiding would only provoke suspicion and lead to further yielding, or to a summons for help in the struggle, both of which alternatives must be avoided.[3] There seems to have been no expectation of the war having an unfavourable influence on the general situation in Germany. Indeed, Bülow actually believed that the danger would force the Czar to turn to Germany for help. Instead of simply declining, it was for us to consider what demands we could then present to Russia. Holstein, on being asked for his opinion, thought it was best for the present to maintain strict neutrality until the Straits problem cropped up. Then Russia would have England, France, Italy, Austria and Roumania against her. If this question became acute, to have Germany to cover her rear would be of incalculable value to Russia; she would then pay no further heed to France and would be willing to grant the long-desired territorial guarantee. To ask it now would be unwise, as it would rouse suspicion that we were trying to separate Russia and France. Japan also must be courteously treated so that she did not become a tool in the hands of our enemies. That the Yellow Race was now considered eligible for alliances was the newest form of the Yellow Peril.[1]

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[1] Despatch to Radolin, October 23rd (*Grosse Politik*, xviii. 799).

[2] Despatch to Radowitz, September 24th. Radowitz, September 26th and 29th (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 362, 359).

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[1] Metternich, November 26th, 1903 (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 362).

[2] January 3rd, 1904 (Goetz, 102).

[3] Bülow's notes, January 16th and February 14th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 34 and 62).

For England and France, neither of whom wished to be involved in the war in the East, its outbreak led to a last effort to conclude the long-drawn-out negotiations over Morocco. In Berlin it was felt that we could not prevent an Anglo-French understanding and that it would even be welcome in the interests of peace.[2] The Kaiser had always maintained that the Morocco question was not of decisive importance for us. In March, 1904, during his Mediterranean tour, the Kaiser met King Alfonso at Vigo and told him, in presence of the German Ambassador, that he was not seeking territorial conquests in Morocco but only to secure free trade and the participation of German capital in the development of the country. At the most, compensation in some other locality seemed desirable; possibly, on the Spanish side, the transfer of Fernando Po in the Guinea Islands, in return for a money indemnity.[3] His advisers were far from pleased at these statements regarding German policy. They would have liked to try to acquire a strip of the Atlantic seaboard, the Sus territory, for Germany. Even at the eleventh hour, when word had already come from Paris that the treaty was virtually ready, Bülow had wished to take advantage of some infringement of rights in Morocco concerning the local agent of a German firm, as a pretext for sending a German man-of-war to Tangier. But this the Kaiser unhesitatingly declined to do, for it would have cast a doubt on the sincerity of the declarations made by him in Vigo. When the treaty was signed shortly afterwards he declared it was a blessing that no naval demonstration had taken place off Morocco. While on his voyage he had seen the English fortifications at Gibraltar and the section of the fleet stationed there, and had been deeply impressed by the strength of the position. He declared at that time that "it is sheer madness to assume that we can carry out a world-wide policy without or, still more, against England." He was extremely anxious to enter into closer relations again with England. His person, he declared, formed the one connecting link. He certainly coupled with that the further inference that he could fulfil this task only if it were facilitated by willingly granting him the speedy increase of the German navy. "That alone could give him the necessary prestige in England." [1]

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[1] Holstein's memorandums of January 16th and 22nd (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 35 and 46).

[2] Bülow's remarks on a conversation with Lascelles, April 6th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 10).

[3] Kaiser's telegram to Bülow, March 16th. Radowitz, March 23rd (*Grosse Politik*, xvii. 363, 364).

On April 8th the treaty between England and France was signed. Besides the settlement of minor disputes in Newfoundland, Senegambia, the Niger territory, Madagascar, and the South Seas, and a final demarcation of the spheres of interest in Siam, France definitely renounced her claim on Egypt and received a free hand in Morocco. The French Government promised, indeed, not to alter the political status of the country; but England recognised France's right, as a neighbouring State, to maintain tranquillity, and to support the Sultan's military and financial reforms. The two Powers pledged themselves to economic equality of opportunity in Egypt and Morocco for thirty years. England promised free passage for ships through the Suez Canal, and both Powers guaranteed free passage through the Straits of Gibraltar. Any fortification on the north coast of Africa was forbidden. A special agreement between France and Spain was held in reserve.

This treaty was immediately made public. It was only known long afterwards that a secret treaty had been signed at the same time making a significant alteration in the existing status in Egypt and Morocco, holding out the prospect of a strengthening of English and French suzerainty respectively, and reserving to Spain an undefined portion of territory in North Morocco on condition that she pledged herself not to part with this strip of land either wholly or in part to any third Power. The significance of these conditions far outstepped the mere adjustment of isolated disputed points. Taken together they formed a complete clearing up of the colonial spheres of interests of the two Powers all over the world such as Chamberlain had advocated as far back as 1898, in the event of the failure of the negotiations for an alliance with Germany. When it is remembered that diplomatic support against the claims of a third Power was agreed upon, and that the observation of strict neutrality in the war between Russia and Japan was tacitly implied, it will be seen that this was a general understanding of far-reaching significance. Although no alliance of any sort had been concluded, yet this treaty was founded on such broad general interests that co-operation would develop naturally should questions of world-wide importance arise.

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[1] Bülow's report with the Kaiser's comments, March 30th. Tchirschky (envoy in the Kaiser's suite) to Bülow, April 3rd (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 197, 199). Rosen, March 31st.

The Kaiser justly considered this agreement a valuable French success, as France had secured England's friendship without losing that of Russia and had achieved a commanding position in Morocco by surrendering a purely theoretical claim in Egypt. England too had thereby acquired greater freedom of movement, as she had no longer any fear of France and need henceforward show less consideration for Germany.[1] Bülow could not deny this, although it constituted a severe indictment of his own policy towards England of late years, and there was no disguising the fact that the Anglo-French comradeship would exercise a strong attraction on Italy. However, he sought to console the Kaiser with the hope that the Entente would soon cool down when the Russo-Japanese peace negotiations began. Then the chances were that England would be on Japan's side, France on Russia's.[2]

It was another delusion. With the coming of the Anglo-French Entente Germany's outwardly brilliant position between the two groups of great Powers had passed for ever.

In looking back over the past ten years it will be seen that Germany's position since the middle of the 'nineties had been very advantageous. Ominous as the conclusion of the Franco-Russian treaty seemed at first it had not been without its good side. It was as unwelcome and as dangerous to England as to Germany, and for that reason seemed to offer a starting-point for an Anglo-German rapprochement. Hitherto England had had to deal with Russia alone in Middle and Eastern Asia, and with France alone in Africa and Indo-China; now there was a chance of both Powers combining forces against England. If England and France got into disputes in Africa, Russia might improve her position meanwhile in the Far East and *vice versa*. It lay with the two groups of Powers threatened by the Dual Alliance, the British Empire and the Triple Alliance, to combine for a common defence. This was the great problem that formed the background of European policy for the next ten years.

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[1] Kaiser to Bülow, April 19th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 22).

[2] Bülow to the Kaiser, April 20th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 23).

We have seen the various attempts which England made to effect such a combination, and how Germany, deeply distrustful of the sincerity of her proposals, first set them aside and afterwards imposed conditions which England would not accept. We also know that there was a further reason for this distrust on Germany's part. As England and the Dual Alliance were supposed to be enemies whose differences almost defied solution, Germany was in the advantageous position of the less encumbered third party whose friendship, or at least whose neutrality, was of the utmost importance to both parties. The events of the war in the East in 1895 having proved that political co-operation with Russia and France was possible in colonial matters in spite of the Balkan question and the Alsace-Lorraine problem, and since good relations had again been established between Berlin and St. Petersburg owing to the personal friendship between the Czar and the Kaiser, the danger of a rupture with the Dual Alliance had receded into the distance. Had the German Government been able to use their central position skilfully they might have gained more thereby than through unconditional adherence to England. But they imagined that the best way to secure the peace of the world, always the first aim of German policy, was to retain their neutral position as long as possible. If neither of the other groups knew what Germany would do in the event of war, it would be all the more reluctant to face the risk of a great struggle. Germany could thus act as peaceful intermediary, or if need be as arbitrator.

Such a policy might perhaps have been feasible had the other

Powers felt assured that Germany would exercise such functions impartially and not exploit her position to secure advantages for herself at the cost of all the others.

But how did matters stand? In Europe, neither Germany nor her allies desired any further conquests for themselves. Austria-Hungary was not aiming at fresh accessions of territory in the Balkans, but only desired to confine Russia's influence within fixed limits. Outside Europe, however, Italy had her ambitions in Africa; Germany at heart wished to increase her relatively insignificant colonial possessions, and allowed this wish to bias strongly her national policy. Herein lay the most significant change from Bismarck's day; it was a change in the general direction of national policy, while in particular questions the breach was continually being widened by the lack of psychological appreciation of effects. There was no thought of depriving other Powers of what they had already won and had secured by treaty; but in the further apportioning of the world Germany wished to secure a share commensurate with her actual position economically and politically. It was not easy to avoid coming into conflict with the wishes and claims of the older and still acquisitive colonial Powers, especially with those of England and France and also of Russia. There was now invariably an effort made to obtain a tangible reward in return for support. We have often heard from Holstein's lips that Germany must be paid in full for every courtesy by means of "compensations." If these were not granted, another group was approached, and touch with both groups was kept sufficiently close for Germany's full adherence to one or other to appear an ominous possibility that might be realised at any time.

Such a policy, attractive as it might seem, was in reality extremely dangerous. It involved constant change of tactics. You had to throw your weight heavily sometimes to the one side, sometimes to the other, ready apparently to accept an outstretched hand but not actually doing so, although, on the other hand, not rejecting it, as that would have finished the game. There was the danger of getting the reputation with other groups of being unreliable. What was to happen to Germany if the other groups tired of this game and eventually preferred to come to a settlement among themselves, so as to avoid having constantly to court Germany's favour and to pay for it without the prospect of ever actually obtaining it?

Worst of all was the fact that these "compensations," for the sake of which we risked so much, were actually of little value to us. For what was the use of small possessions scattered over the face of the globe which we could not defend in the event of war? Had our colonial activity been based on a well-thought-out comprehensive plan, such as a great interdependent colonial territory in Africa, we might have used our central position, untrammelled by either group, to secure what we were striving for, or else, if that were not feasible, we might have thrown in our lot definitely with whichever party was prepared to grant our aims and help us to assert them. But there was no definite tangible goal for our colonial and world policy. We wished in a general sort of way not to be left out, and wherever others were getting something, to secure a bit for ourselves; and so we went on playing this sinister double game for the sake of snatching here and there some petty colonial advantages, irritating afresh the other Powers without reaping any actual profit to ourselves. The result was that the other Powers, unable to credit such aimlessness in policy, suspected Germany of concealing deep-laid and dangerous schemes which seemed all the more formidable because no one could say in what they consisted or what their ultimate limits might be. Germany's policy was looked upon as unreliable and unintelligible, whereas it was merely planless, petty and uncertain.

It is possible, indeed probable, that Bülow, and the Kaiser also, originally in their inmost hearts wished for an alliance with England and only coquetted with the Dual Alliance in order to get better terms from her. But there is no doubt that the Kaiser was powerfully influenced by the traditional friendship with Russia, the feeling of the solidarity of monarchical interests, an old and deeply rooted sentiment. The commercial rivalry with England, the desire to have a navy strong enough to oppose her, the attractive picture of a union of the Continental European States under Germany's leadership, all conspired to drive us over to the other group. For this reason the Kaiser promised the Czar that he would cover his rear while he was engaged in the Far East, with the object of diverting his attention from the Near East, where conflict with

Austria threatened, to such an extent that he would not have a free hand in the latter direction. But we must admit that an inner uncertainty and indecision played in German policy as great a part as calculated tacking. This was the cause of the ever growing idea that as soon as a final choice was made between England and the Dual Alliance, Germany would forfeit the advantages of her central position; and she underestimated the danger that a reconciliation of the other Powers would necessarily involve her own isolation.

The leaders of German policy followed the lure of these conflicting possibilities. Partly from inward uncertainty and partly from subtle calculation, for nearly a decade they pursued this policy of tacking, of two irons in the fire, "balance and counterbalance," a "zig-zag course," without ever clearly envisaging the dangers inseparable from it, though a suspicion may occasionally have flashed across their consciousness. The most logical and resolute exponent of this policy was Herr von Holstein. He always succeeded in allaying doubts when they made their appearance and prevented any leaning to one side. With tireless ingenuity he persistently demonstrates in his memoirs that any other policy would have been ruinous and would have involved our sacrificing ourselves for foreign interests. And the men who were outwardly responsible to the nation invariably acquiesced in his decisions.

Germany's freedom of choice was therefore wholly superficial. We might certainly have approached England without infringing any treaty obligations towards Russia, although the Kaiser's ambiguous assurances to the Czar did constitute to a certain extent a moral tie. But we could not have approached the Dual Alliance so long as France desired Alsace-Lorraine and so long as the Balkan question between Russia and Austria remained unsolved. We could only avoid a direct conflict with the Dual Alliance so long as we were sure of the Czar and—so long as the Czar remained master of Russia's policy.

The consummation of the Entente between England and France in 1904 destroyed even the semblance of our position as arbiter. We suddenly began to realise our parlous plight. But the course of events in the Russo-Japanese War, and their issue, swept from under our feet the last supports on which German policy had rested since 1895 and on which it still seemed to rest.

## IX. TANGIER AND BJÖRKÖ

The Anglo-French agreement brought Morocco, a country which had hitherto been little noticed, suddenly into the very forefront of international politics. It rivalled Alsace-Lorraine as a new apple of discord between France and Germany; and over it broke out afresh their old and, as it seemed, slowly disappearing enmity. How did this come about?

We must look at the situation in the spring of 1904. Russia was in the throes of a great war in the Far East and had already suffered several defeats. France and England had come to an agreement not to intervene and had reached a settlement of all their disputes. Germany, too, had declared that she would remain neutral. Apart from the fact that Germany had forfeited the valuable asset of her central position, the vital change in the position was this, that Russia's defeats had impaired her influence in the Near East sufficiently to make active interference there difficult for her. Ought not Austria to make the most of this opportunity in order to solve the Near Eastern problems in her own favour?

This was at first dreaded in many quarters. As early as February there had been rumours of Austrian armaments and movements of troops on Mitrowitza. Italy especially was very distrustful. Count Goluchowski, however, gave the most solemn assurances that these rumours were untrue; he would probably strengthen the garrison in the Sanjak of Novibazar, which he would be quite justified in doing, but even this was not settled. The Austrian Ambassador in Berlin said quite openly that Austria had not enough confidence in herself to risk such an adventure. There were only two things they would not tolerate—an increase of Serbia and an occupation of Albania by the Italians. At an interview with the Italian Minister, Tittoni, in Abbazia in April, 1904, Count Goluchowski declared emphatically that Austria was not aiming at any increase of territory; if war broke out between Bulgaria and Turkey, Austria would endeavour to localise it. This reassured Tittoni.[1]

On the other hand, it was feared that when the Morocco treaty became known, Italy would immediately proceed to occupy Tripoli. The Italian statesmen, however, equally disclaimed all desire for military adventures.

Then too there was a fear abroad lest Germany might attempt to break up the Dual Alliance, or, if she failed in that, might take the chance, when Russia's hands were tied, to settle accounts with France. From a military point of view the prospect was extraordinarily attractive. General von Schlieffen, the Chief of the General Staff, interrogated by the Imperial Chancellor, declared that Russia could not possibly carry on two large wars at the same time, and added, "If the necessity of a war with France should present itself to us, the present moment would be undoubtedly favourable."[2] Nevertheless there is not the slightest evidence that the German Government contemplated taking advantage of this situation. There could be no better proof of Germany's sincere love of peace than her refusal to use this opportunity to overthrow her ancient and implacable foe.

Far different plans were being considered. An attempt was contemplated to detach Russia from France at a suitable moment or to induce France, under pressure from Russia, to co-operate in the formation of the great Continental League already so often desired.

In the pattern of all these fears and possibilities of high politics the Morocco problem at the outset filled only a minor place. Spain, who had not been included in the last Anglo-French negotiations, felt herself slighted and wanted a definite share.

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[1] Note of February 15th, 1904, on Count Bubna's communications. Wedel, February 18th and 29th. Despatch to Wedel, February 20th. Marschall, February 19th. Monts, February 18th, 19th, 23rd, 26th. Wedel, February 26th. Consul-General, Budapest, March 2nd. Note on Szögenyi's communication, March 3rd. Monts, March 5th. The interview at Abbazia: Wedel, April 14th; Monts, April 16th. Goluchowski's note communicated to Berlin, April 30th (*Grosse Politik*, xviii. 638-643, 646, 647).

[2] Lichnowsky's note on a conversation with Schlieffen, April 19th, 1904; Schlieffen to Bülow, April 20th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 174, 175).

In Berlin there was a certain inclination to give Spain diplomatic support in return for some small consideration, but this idea was finally abandoned.[1] In June Holstein defined his point of view in a memorandum: if Morocco falls to France that means the introduction of the French prohibitive system, the exclusion of German trade and capital. Proximity of frontiers alone is no reason for claiming preferential political treatment. To let a question in which German interests are involved be settled without Germany's co-operation, is injurious to our prestige. If we let them tread on our toes in Morocco without any protest we are encouraging the same thing to happen elsewhere.[2] Bülow on this decided to avoid any direct or indirect recognition of the agreements signed by the Western Powers. France was not asked what guarantee she offered for Germany's economic interests, as that would have implied a recognition of her privileged position; nor was there any attempt made at direct competition with her. Instead of that it was decided to shelter behind the Sultan and encourage him to oppose French plans.[3]

In the summer France gradually began her task of "peaceful penetration." She aimed at the concentration of the entire national debt of Morocco in her hands, the control of the customs, and the reorganisation of the Moroccan army under French command; also French warships were stationed off Tangier. Through inquiries in London the German Government sought to find out in what circumstances England's diplomatic support, as provided for in the treaty, would become operative, but received only a general answer.[4] Berlin then planned an ultimatum to the Sultan regarding old claims still unsatisfied, and if this were disregarded, a naval demonstration. Bülow favoured this, but the Kaiser refused his consent.[5] Nothing happened until the autumn, although the German representative in Morocco pointed out that France was constantly gaining ground. The occupation of Agadir proposed by him was rejected as being too dangerous.[1]

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[1] Despatches to Radowitz, April 29th and May 22nd; to Metternich, May 31st (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 169-176).

[2] Holstein's memorandum, June 3rd, 1904 (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 207).

[3] Despatch to Radolin, July 21st. Radolin, July 27th. Note from Richthofen, July 29th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 210, 215, 217).

[4] Despatch to Metternich, August 7th. Metternich, August 15th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 217-219).

[5] Note from Mühlberg, August 16th. Bülow to Tschirschky, August 17th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 223, 224).

On October 3rd the long negotiations between France and Spain were concluded. The strip of northern seaboard exclusive of Fez was recognised as the Spanish sphere of influence, also the Atlantic coast from 11° latitude west (of Paris) towards the south-west which really was no longer part of Morocco. Spain was not to exercise any special rights here for fifteen years to come without previously consulting France, provided, of course, the Sherifian Empire did not collapse. No part of this territory was to be even temporarily ceded or sold, and in no case was military assistance to be sought from other Powers. Important economic undertakings were only to be granted to Spanish or French subjects. The special position of Tangier as the seat of the European diplomatic Corps was provided for, and fortifications on certain stretches of the coast were forbidden. The text of this treaty was not published, but the Powers and the general public were informed that an understanding had been reached.

The fact that up to the end of 1904 the German Government took no part in the Morocco question, either in supporting Spain or in presenting claims in Paris, is the best proof that German policy was altogether free from any thought of using this chance for bringing about a conflict with France. There could have been no more opportune moment for such a war, if it had been desired, than in the summer of 1904, when Russia had been compelled by her defeats in the East to send all her troops thither, and while Spain and France had not yet reached a settlement.

Meanwhile the Russo-Japanese War, contrary to general expectation in Europe, developed more and more unfavourably for the Russians. In the end of June, 1904, when King Edward came to Kiel, he told the Kaiser and Bülow that in his opinion Russia could no longer look for any change of luck in her favour. If the Czar were wise he would at once give up Manchuria and Korea. He himself would be willing to mediate, and Japan would be conciliatory. The Yellow Peril was imagination; the Japanese were intelligent, brave and chivalrous, and as civilised as Europeans. For the rest he declared that the Anglo-French treaty was not in any way directed against Germany. He would endeavour to bring about a similar solution of conflicting interests with Russia too.[1] In New York President Roosevelt spoke in similar terms of the probable issue of the war; only he thought it possible to neutralize Manchuria and advocated close co-operation between the United States and Germany in order to maintain the policy of the 'open door' in Asia. A settlement proposed by Bülow was opposed by Hay, the American Secretary of State, as being counter to constitutional law.[2]

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[1] Richthofen to Bülow, October 7th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 228).

The maintenance of neutrality was not congenial to the Kaiser. At heart he was on the side of the Czar. In September he commented as follows "for the guidance of my diplomatists":[3] Japan already regarded us as the barrier in the great inevitable struggle between the white and the yellow races; the United States of Europe must therefore stand together under Germany's leadership; Russia represented the cause of the white races, and therefore our sympathies were with her. The withdrawal of Russian troops from the German frontiers, dictated by stern necessity, the Kaiser regarded as a touching proof of confidence. He would have preferred to have gone to the rescue of the Czar against the Asiatics, but as he realised the seriousness of this step, he intended at least to maintain "benevolent neutrality."[4]

As a matter of fact the German Government adhered rigidly to the observance of neutrality. The disabled Russian warships which had escaped from Port Arthur were allowed to enter the harbour of Kiau-Chou, but were immediately dismantled and their crews interned, when they did not quit the harbour at the conclusion of the period allowed by international law. It was quite legal for the Hamburg-Amerika Line, through the agency of a private firm at St. Petersburg, to deliver coal for the Russian battleships sailing east. The Kaiser was indignant at the Japanese protests, which were declared by the German Government to be unfounded. Support for their Japanese allies was forthcoming from London, where Lord Lansdowne once remarked that Japan might ask whether the treaty were not operative if Germany violated her neutrality. Japan probably never intended to go so far, but she gave such lively expression to her irritation that the Kaiser ordered the Hamburg-Amerika Line to refuse further supplies of coal once they were beyond Madagascar, as then they were in the actual theatre of war. In any case these proceedings show how inflamed feeling was on the Anglo-Japanese side against Germany.[1]

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[1] Bülow's notes on the conversations in Kiel, June 26th and 29th, 1904. Shortly before the Kaiser had expressed the view that possibly the Anglo-French agreement was secretly directed against Germany, which he had till then never believed. To Bülow, June 6th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 186, 189. *Ibid.* xx. 147).

[2] Bülow's note, August 24th. Bülow to the Kaiser, August 31st. Despatch to Sternburg, October 22nd. Sternburg, October 26th, November 16th and 17th, 1904 (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 535-546).

[3] Comment of September 9th on despatch of Count Arco from Tokio, August 11th, 1904 (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 210).

[4] The Kaiser to Bülow, September 25th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 252).

On October 15th the Russian East Seas Fleet under Admiral Roshjestvenski left Reval to proceed to the East. The Kaiser at the same time, without previously giving any hint of his intention, had also advised the Czar to send the Black Sea squadron through the Dardanelles into the Mediterranean. The Sultan would not venture on resistance and the other Powers would find themselves confronted by an accomplished fact.[2] The Czar may well have had very serious doubts about a step which was bound to open up the whole Straits problem.

On the night of the 21st October the Russian fleet, as is well known, opened fire on English fishing boats on the Dogger Bank because they suspected Japanese torpedo boats of being among them. This incident, which roused intense feeling in England, was partially allayed when Russia and England agreed to submit their case to the Hague Tribunal, but it had political consequences of far-reaching magnitude. In England the rumour spread that the Russian outrage was the result of Germany's warnings of England's evil intentions, and that she had hoped in this way to bring about a serious conflict between Russia and England. In spite of all denials many people in England continued to believe in our guilt, which further embittered feeling against Germany. It was felt that the Kaiser was really on Russia's side, and England being Japan's ally, that fact itself was viewed indirectly as an indication of hostility to England.[1] From the German side an attempt was made both officially, through the Russian Ambassador, and by telegram from the Kaiser to the Czar, to profit by the Czar's bitterness towards England in order to pave the way for the Continental League. Holstein seems to have been the originator of this idea ; at least he carried through the negotiations with Baron Osten-Sacken. The essence of his proposals was : Germany and Russia were to conclude a defensive alliance, and once they had come to an agreement they were to communicate it to France and summon her to join with them. In order to produce the required feeling in France, whose objection to enter into an alliance with Germany was taken for granted, the Czar was previously to ask the French Government if it were prepared to fulfil the treaty obligations involved in the Dual Alliance if England succoured Japan. They assumed that France, faced with the choice of helping Russia against England and thereby ranging herself on the same side with Germany, or renouncing the Dual Alliance and fighting eventually on England's side against Germany and Russia, would choose the former. Delcassé, the Kaiser declared, was shrewd enough to realise that the English fleet could not protect Paris.[2]

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[1] For the documents relating to these matters *vide Grosse Politik*, xix. 247-277. Metternich's report of August 15th on Lord Lansdowne's remark is not given there.

[2] The Kaiser to the Czar, October 10th (Goetz, 128).

Count Lamsdorff did not fail to impress on his master that, desirable and perhaps even necessary as it was to have closer relations with Germany at the present moment, the procedure suggested by the Kaiser could not fail to annoy France and could only succeed in impairing the stability of the Dual Alliance. The Czar did not accept this view ; he considered the Continental League the best means of curbing England's insolence both then and in the future. Accordingly he telegraphed to the Kaiser his cordial agreement and asked him to draft the outlines of such a treaty. If they were both of one mind, France would be obliged to join them ; such a League would secure the peace of the world.

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[1] Metternich, November 1st. On the increasing hostility of public opinion in England and the idea of a preventive war, *vide* the reports of the naval attaché in London, November 13th and 18th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 291 and 353).

[2] The exchange of telegrams between the Kaiser and the Czar at this period is printed in the *Documents from the Russian Secret Archives*, p. 335 f. *Vide* also Lamsdorff's report to the Czar on the negotiations between Osten-Sacken and Holstein and on the Czar's decision of October 26th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 63).

In Berlin they set to work at once to prepare a draft. Both Powers were to promise to aid one another with all their forces, were either of them attacked by any other European Power. In certain events both Powers would jointly remind France of her treaty obligations towards Russia. No separate peace was to be concluded. The treaty would apply if deliveries of coal during the present war were regarded by the other side as an infringement of neutrality. The Czar, probably on his Minister's advice, suggested some alterations of the text, to which the Kaiser agreed, and a second draft was then submitted. The difference between the two copies was immaterial. The introductory statements were of such a general nature that the treaty did not appear to be specially directed against England and its defensive character was strongly pronounced. The clause regarding France was as follows: "The Czar will take the necessary steps to inform France of these arrangements and to bind her to join us as an ally." It was furthermore agreed that the treaty should remain in force for a year after notice had been given, and that Germany was not to take part in any action whatsoever capable of a hostile tendency towards Russia. The Kaiser added by way of elucidation that the possibility of participation in a Peace Conference which might be summoned in order to deprive Russia, as in 1878, of the fruits of her victories, would thereby be excluded.[1] These victories, however, had not yet been won, although the Czar still hoped for a complete reversal in his favour.

Things now took an unexpected turn. On November 23rd the Czar expressed his agreement with the last draft of the treaty, but proposed communicating it to the French before concluding it. If this were not done till it was ratified, it might seem to France as if her consent were being made compulsory.[2] The Ministers who had all along represented this point of view had finally overcome the Czar's personal wishes in this matter.

The Kaiser immediately replied that the success of the whole affair depended on the Czar and himself being absolutely united and pledged to each other before France heard a word of it. France could only exercise a restraining influence on England if she knew of the irrevocable bond between the two Sovereigns and was afraid of finding herself in a parlous plight. But if England were to learn from France that an alliance of that kind was in preparation but not yet concluded, she might immediately use her superiority at sea to annihilate the small German navy and cripple Germany for the time being. If the Czar, therefore, was only willing to conclude the treaty after consulting the French, he would prefer to give it up entirely.[1]

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[1] *Vide* Goetz, 135 and 146; *Grcsse Politik*, xix. 308 and 311.

[2] Czar's telegram of November 10th and 23rd (*Secret Documents*, 343; *Grosse Politik*, xix. 317).

Early in December the Kaiser made another attempt to reach his end by indirect means. As England had forbidden German ships which they suspected of carrying coal to the Russian fleet to leave English harbours, the Kaiser called the Czar's attention to the fact as showing him where he stood, and told him he ought to regulate his conduct towards England accordingly. An official enquiry was made at St. Petersburg asking if Russia would pledge herself to support Germany if difficulties arose out of the delivery of coal. Otherwise German steamers would be obliged to refuse to deliver coal once the Russian fleet was clear of Madagascar. On Bülow's advice, the Kaiser expressed to the Czar the desire to extend the Russian obligation to help to all disputes which might arise after the conclusion of the present war, in consequence of the alleged infringement of neutrality. France could be approached later on. Count Lamsdorff professed his willingness to make common cause with Germany for all the consequences of the deliveries of coal provided Germany was willing to maintain its benevolent attitude (December 12th). The Kaiser considered this was confining the treaty within too strict limits and tried to get back to the general defensive treaty on the conditions previously suggested. In view of the Czar's former attitude Bülow thought this would not succeed, and contented himself with considering the restricted aid suggested by Russia. Lamsdorff held out the prospect that if the co-operation held good, it might later on, when public opinion had been familiarized with it, develop into a closer friendship. He also expressed himself favourably as to the subsequent inclusion of France.[1] The negotiations for a general alliance ended in the Kaiser declaring on December 21st to the Czar that, if he felt it impossible to conclude the treaty without previously communicating it to France, it was better to give it up and to continue "our present attitude of mutual independence and spontaneous furthering of our mutual aims so far as circumstances permit." The Ambassador was directed to wait quietly and see if Count Lamsdorff would bring forward any further proposals.[2]

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[1] The Kaiser's telegram, 16th and 26th (*Secret Documents*, 343 f.; *Grosse Politik*, xix. 318).

Holstein must subsequently have been glad that nothing came of the alliance. He declared that it had been brought forward in the autumn from fear lest France, supported by an Anglo-Russian understanding, might be aiming at a great partitioning of territory in the Far East, and because an alliance with Russia was the safest way to prevent this combination. Meanwhile President Roosevelt and the other neutral States had shown that they were wholly against a dismemberment of China; there was therefore no longer any chance of obtaining territory there. Furthermore, the United States insisted that Port Arthur must not be left in Russia's hands, while any treaty with Russia would have bound us to enable her to regain it. We could not risk embroiling ourselves with America.[3]

Yet another attempt was made shortly afterwards, and failed, to bind Russia in at least one future problem of importance. In February, 1905, Bülow submitted a proposal in St. Petersburg by which both States pledged themselves not to seek any territorial advantage no matter what turn Austria-Hungary's internal affairs might take. In the event of a collapse of the Danubian Monarchy—this was the first time this ominous possibility had been seriously faced—we were to renounce beforehand the annexation of German Austria, and Russia was to renounce the incorporation of the Slav territories. Count Lamsdorff seemed not unfavourable towards this declaration of disinterestedness, but requested definite German proposals as to the text and absolute secrecy from Austria. But when Bülow sought to make Russia formulate terms, the negotiations fell through.[1] Would such agreements have had any practical value in view of the violence of the national feeling that would undoubtedly have been aroused by an actual collapse of Austria?

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[1] Despatches to Alvensleben, December 6th, 12th, 21st, 1904. Telegram from the Kaiser to the Czar, December 7th. Lamsdorff's note, December 12th. Alvensleben, December 12th, 13th, 26th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 320-343).

[2] The Kaiser to the Czar, December 21st, 1904 (Goetz, 152). Note to Alvensleben, January 1st, 1905 (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 347).

[3] Holstein's memorandum, February 2nd, 1905 (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 349).

The ardently desired unity with Russia had not been gained, and with England Germany's relations were steadily growing worse.

The difficulties due to the divergence between the German and the English conception of the duties of neutrals had been overcome; indeed it was even maintained in public that there had never been any serious differences; but things were far from comfortable. Across the Channel the fear was gaining ground that Germany was building her fleet in order to attack England when she was strong enough. The building of battleships and their concentration in East Asiatic waters was a menace to English interests there. After the Dogger Bank incident, the *Army and Navy Gazette* announced that the German fleet had held itself in readiness to hasten to the help of Russia, a fact which ought to decide England to see to it that the German fleet was not further increased. In February, 1905, a member of the English Government, a Civil Lord of the Admiralty, stated publicly that England must prohibit the further construction of the German navy. In Germany, on the other hand, the new disposition of the English fleet was resented, and there was the constant fear of a sudden attack before our navy was strong enough to ward it off. In view of this deepening distrust between the two nations little confidence was felt when the Governments of both countries exchanged assurances of their peaceful intentions. Towards the close of 1904 Bülow formulated his programme, according to which Germany was "to seek to get through the next years with patience and goodwill and to give no reasonable ground for suspicion." Meanwhile we might strengthen our fleet.[2] Shortly after this he thought it possible to effect a change of outlook in England by the offer of "compensated neutrality" which would remove the dread of aggressive views on the part of Germany; but therein he grievously misjudged the prevailing mood across the Channel.[1]

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[1] Despatches to Alvensleben, February 15th, March 10th. Alvensleben, March 8th and 12th. Holstein's memorandum, March 18th. Despatch to Alvensleben, April 10th; to Sternburg (for communication to Roosevelt, April 14th, 1905). None of these documents is given in *Grosse Politik*. In the note to Sternburg (xix. 578) the passages bearing on the subject are omitted.

[2] Bülow to the Kaiser, December 26th, 1904 (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 372).

Early in 1905 Port Arthur was captured by the Japanese. Shortly afterwards internal disturbances broke out in Russia and roused the fear that further defeats might involve an internal collapse. At the end of February began the great battle of Mukden which lasted over fourteen days and ended with the complete defeat of the Russians and the evacuation of the larger part of Manchuria. So the prospect of ultimate victory for Russia became even more remote.

Just at this moment the German Government resolved to take a decisive step in the Morocco question against France, Russia's ally. The Kaiser had repeatedly expressed his utter indifference to the developments in Morocco, to King Alfonso of Spain, for instance, in the spring of 1904, and in July to King Edward at Kiel. Count Bülow had often spoken in a similar strain. In November, 1904, Count Münster had received instructions, in consideration of France's conciliatory attitude, "to refrain from anything which might seem like a senseless threat."[2] The German Ambassador in Morocco, Freiherr von Mentzingen, was meanwhile constantly complaining of the conduct of the French. The French Ambassador had recently handed the Sultan a formal ultimatum and at the same time sought to produce the impression that he was acting on behalf of all the Great Powers. Our representative was convinced that Germany's economic activity in Morocco would very soon be at an end if the French obtained their demands.

In Berlin it was decided to send Dr. Vassel to Fez, and through him to inform the Sultan that Germany had not given her consent to France's proceedings. No prospect was held out of direct help in a conflict with France, and Bülow even expressly declared that Germany could not go to war with France for the sake of Morocco, but for all that the Sultan was encouraged to resist. He therefore proceeded to summon delegates from all parts of his country to the capital, relying on them to support

[1] Metternich, January 3rd, 1905.

[2] Communicated to Metternich, November 16th, 1904.

him in his rejection of the French demands. Furthermore, the Sultan was required in a written statement to affirm that he would maintain unimpaired the previous treaties, especially the Madrid convention of 1880, guaranteeing equal privileges for all Europeans throughout the country.[1]

This was all done secretly, however, and almost unobserved. Suddenly in the middle of March a dramatic coup was planned. The moving spirit seems to have been Herr von Holstein, who had previously insisted that we should not let anyone tread on our toes in Morocco. The Kaiser was intending that spring to take another voyage in the Mediterranean. He was now advised that he ought to use this opportunity to land at Tangier and thereby show that he considered the Sultan an independent ruler and did not recognise any French protectorate over the country. After his previous attitude in the Morocco question the Kaiser had small inclination for this, but Bülow constantly plied him with the argument that such a step would be very unpleasant for the French. Delcassé, he declared, was already sweating blood, and would be " done " if things went so far : the Kaiser's voyage to Tangier was for the moment the centre of interest to the whole world. He played skilfully on the Kaiser's vanity in order to overcome his resistance. To cut off any possibility of retreat, as soon as the Kaiser had given his consent, an official article appeared (on March 20th) in the *Norddeutscher Allgemeiner Zeitung* announcing the Kaiser's approaching visit to Tangier, and at the same time declaring that Germany was not pursuing any selfish aims but merely upholding the defence of the principle of economic equality of opportunity for all nations.[2] On March 23rd, before leaving Germany, at the unveiling of a memorial at Bremen to his father, the Kaiser made a speech in which he dwelt upon the peaceful nature of German policy and his own abhorrence of all plans of conquest. Germany, he said, wished to be a quiet, honest, and peace-loving neighbour to all other States. Perhaps he was tempted into using these words through his misgivings as to the intended visit to Tangier.

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[1] Kühlmann, December 17th, 1904, and January 31st, 1905. Despatches to Kühlmann, January 2nd and 30th, February 11th and March 10th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 239-260).

[2] Bülow to the Kaiser, March 20th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 262, 264).

How distasteful his prescribed rôle was is seen from the fact that on his way there he telegraphed to Tangier that it was very doubtful if he would land, in any case he would only be travelling as a private tourist and he begged to decline any official reception. Bülow, however, thereupon telegraphed that this was impossible, for the official announcement had already been sent off, and if he did not go now it would look as if he had changed his decision from fear of France. An official reception had already been arranged by the Sultan's representative and the European residents, and the line of thought for the inevitable speeches was being telegraphed from Berlin to the Kaiser at Lisbon. The German Ambassador there, Herr von Tattenbach, received orders from Bülow to accompany the Kaiser and see that everything was carried out according to the programme. Nevertheless the Kaiser hesitated to the very end about landing, alleging the roughness of the sea and the absence of a suitable riding-horse, though these were only excuses veiling his secret dislike of the entire proceedings. However, as the whole ceremony had already been staged, the Sultan's uncle and numerous deputations were actually there, and all the European residents in Tangier had turned out, the landing could not be avoided. It came off on March 31st, and was a brilliant success. First of all there was a reception of the foreign diplomatists at which the French chargé d'affaires unexpectedly made a speech as if he were welcoming the Kaiser to Morocco, in the name of France, which had no thought of infringing the economic equality of other nations. The Kaiser thereupon replied somewhat brusquely that he would deal direct with the Sultan as ruler of an independent country and would secure satisfaction for his own just claims and expected that these would be respected also by France. This incident evidently induced him, in replying to the address from the Sultan's uncle, to add to the line of thought prescribed for him a hit at the annexation schemes of other Powers.[1]

Naturally everyone asked what was the meaning of this extraordinary step, and as no clear answer was forthcoming the wildest rumours were circulated. In England and France the view prevailed that Germany wanted to take advantage of Russia's temporary weakness to force a war with France and crush her utterly while she was deprived of her ally's help. Others again regarded it as a formal protest against the Anglo-French rapprochement of which the Morocco Treaty was the visible symbol. In Berlin, as we know, there was no thought of a war with France for the sake of Morocco. Their idea was simply to uphold Germany's prestige, to show that they were not willing to be left out, to check France's introduction of her policy of peaceful penetration till Germany's consent had been obtained by means of concessions elsewhere. But it was thought best for the time being to wrap these views in an impenetrable mist. Bülow instructed the Foreign Office to give no information to foreign diplomatists in reply to queries on the subject, but to "emulate the Sphinx who, surrounded by inquisitive tourists, gives nothing away."[1]

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[1] The Kaiser to Bülow, March 21st. Bülow to the Kaiser, March 21st, 26th, 27th, 29th. v. Schön to the Foreign Office, March 31st (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 263, 272-287).

The immediate result of the Kaiser's visit was that the Sultan inquired if he could reckon on Germany's support if he refused to reply to the French demands, so long as these were not sanctioned by a conference of European Powers. The reply was affirmative. Berlin was greatly pleased with this result. Bülow wrote to the Kaiser that he could now await calmly, in a dignified and impregnable position, the settlement of the whole question. Holstein triumphantly declared there was no going back now; that would be as bad as the humiliation at Olmütz and even worse than the French defeat at Fashoda.[2]

It was not without significance that from the very beginning warnings came in that in England the Kaiser's visit was not regarded as a measure for the protection of German interests, but as a demonstration against the Anglo-French Entente, and that they were prepared to support France in all circumstances even to a degree above that stipulated in the Morocco agreement.[3] In France itself, the incident had had the very undesirable result for us that it had silenced the hitherto vigorous opposition of the Nationalists to any new colonial venture. This party objected to having French forces detained in Africa as they were thereby not available for a war of revenge. But as soon as the Morocco enterprise developed an anti-German bias they had naturally no further cause for opposing it.

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[1] Bülow to the Foreign Office, March 24th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 271).

[2] Kühlmann, April 1st. Despatch to Kühlmann, April 3rd. Bülow to the Kaiser, April 4th and 11th. Holstein's opinion, April 4th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 294, 295, 301, 304, 320).

[3] Metternich, April 6th. Bernstorff, May 1st (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 604 and 618).

What was even more embarrassing, however, was that the French Government, though in an indirect and indefinite form, began to make inquiries as to what Germany would expect from France as the price of her consent to a French protectorate over Morocco. Rouvier, the French Premier, several times offered suggestions for such an arrangement. He promised every possible guarantee for freedom of trade and declared it would be simply criminal if neighbouring countries which had reached a mutual understanding should come to loggerheads over Morocco.[1] In Berlin they would only have been too glad to obtain something for themselves either on the Atlantic seaboard of Morocco or in the French colonies in Africa. But unfortunately the Kaiser privately at Vigo, and then on the suggestion of his advisers, publicly at Tangier, had proclaimed Germany's disinterestedness in such unmistakable fashion that Germany was not in a position to negotiate for compensations without acting in direct contradiction to the Kaiser's statements. Then, too, it would have been necessary to sacrifice the Sultan to the French after having encouraged him to oppose them, which would have reacted unfavourably on Germany throughout the rest of the Mahommedan world. Bülow therefore thought, although convinced that immediate colonial advantages ought to have been obtained from France, that it was best for the present to maintain the Sherifian Empire in spite of its undoubted internal corruption, and on some subsequent occasion to advocate Germany's interests.[2] But some time would need to elapse to let the Kaiser's words be forgotten, and meanwhile France was to be impeded as much as possible in her occupation of territory and later on to be made to pay heavily for Germany's acquiescence. Such was the actual plan of the German Government. The deeper and more dangerous schemes which were credited to it had no basis in fact. It was a petty policy dictated in turn by greed, perplexity, and love of prestige, which sought trivial things rather than what was great and lasting. It was perplexity that led them to insist on the conference suggested by the Sultan, because they could think of no other way to maintain the existing position of affairs and to get rid of the engagements they had entered into with him. They fancied this proceeding was perfectly safe because the French people did not want war, and England would only offer diplomatic support, while Russia was wholly unable to succour her ally.[1]

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[1] Radolin, April 14th and 27th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 330, 344).

[2] Despatch to Radolin, April 28th; to Tattenbach, April 30th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 346 and 352).

Now, however, Rouvier made a new and most unexpected move. He advocated both directly and through Rome a general clearing up of all colonial questions in dispute between Germany and France, after the pattern of the Anglo-French treaty.

Count Monts, the German Ambassador in Rome, pointed out that mutual guarantees of territories and interests in the Far East, delimitation of spheres of interest in Asia Minor, and French support for the Bagdad railway even against Russia and England might probably be obtained by this means; and that such an agreement would constitute a guarantee of peace for a long time to come. He declared it might prove a veritable Canossa for the French if we only humoured their vanity.[2] The significance of the French overture which was indefinite in character is here possibly somewhat overrated. In any case it would have been worth while to have made it clear by further negotiations how far the French were in earnest and what actual concessions they were prepared to make. Perhaps a formula might have been evolved for securing compensations without falling into flagrant contradiction of our earlier declarations. Count Bülow, however, thought otherwise. He preferred at a moment when no help could be expected from Russia to inflict a humiliation on the French, to bring home to them that, now more than ever, they were dependent upon Germany's goodwill, and that even the

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[1] Holstein, May 5th.

[2] Radolin, April 30th and May 1st. The indirect efforts in Rome: Monts to Bülow, May 3rd, Flotow, June 6th and 9th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 355, 360, 362, 416, 425). For the secrecy observed towards the Kaiser *vide* p. 250.

Entente with England could not relieve them from the necessity of taking into consideration Germany's rights and interests in colonial matters. Evidently, misjudging the French temperament, he thought a reminder of that kind would have a wholesome effect on public opinion there. Owing, however, to the Kaiser's earlier remarks about Morocco, and to the fact that he was plainly more set than ever upon the plan of a Continental League, and would therefore be unwilling to irritate France, Bülow determined not to tell his master about Rouvier's offer and simply to take no notice of it. Not only so, he suggested to Rouvier to dismiss Delcassé because the latter was hostile to Germany. He insisted on France at least postponing her plans in Morocco and consenting to the proposed conference. There was for a moment a fear in Berlin lest the Powers hostile to Germany might be in the majority at the Conference, which would have been extremely awkward. But they consoled themselves quickly with the thought that they would insist on all the decisions being unanimous so that nothing could happen against Germany's wish. On May 28th the Sultan declined the French proposals and invited the Powers to Tangier. Now therefore a decision could no longer be avoided.[1]

Rouvier, at this juncture, approached the German Government with the offer to dismiss Delcassé, although his own subservience to Germany's orders would give great offence, provided Germany expressed herself willing to pursue a friendly policy towards his successor. But Bülow replied that this would only be possible if France abandoned her headstrong policy in Morocco.[2] At the same time Germany accepted the Sultan's invitation and announced her adherence to the standpoint of the treaty of Madrid of 1880, which established the economic equality of all nations in Morocco and decreed that nothing could be changed without the consent of all the signatories.

In France meanwhile feeling was running very high. Undoubtedly Delcassé wished to reject the Conference even at the risk of war. He appeared to have received a definite assurance from England of armed support in the event of war with Germany. During April King Edward was twice in Paris on his journey to and from Italy and had discussed the situation with him. The nation as a whole, however, was undoubtedly against war. The Minister of War, owing to the state of the French armaments, was forced to admit that the prospects were very doubtful; and, moreover, it was questionable if English help would prove of much use in a land war. On June 4th, at the decisive meeting of the Ministerial Council, Delcassé was in the minority. He handed in his resignation.[1]

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[1] Holstein's note, May 2nd. Despatches to Radolin, May 22nd and 30th. Tattenbach, May 26th and 28th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 357, 382, 388, 391, 392).

[2] Von Miquel, May 30th and 31st. Radolin, June 3rd. Flotow, June 6th. Despatch to Flotow, June 5th and 6th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 393, 397, 402, 404, 413).

Germany had scored a great success. Rouvier now asked that Germany should at least make his position easier before the Conference by coming to an agreement with him as to the rights which they wished France to forgo in Morocco. Bülow, however, insisted that the Conference must be accepted unconditionally; after that they could discuss the attitude to be adopted.[2] The challenge issued by France must first of all be formally cleared up. The German Ambassador, Prince Radolin, even uttered the threatening words, "Germany's whole might stands behind the Sultan." Italy, who was unwilling to be at variance with France and was in sympathy with her Morocco policy, was summoned by the Imperial Chancellor to take part in the Conference under threat of notice from the Triple Alliance. She gave reluctantly a very conditional assent. But at the same time Bülow allowed himself to part with a concession whose far-reaching importance he failed to grasp, when he consented to the Conference granting France a mandate for special protective measures in the districts adjoining Algeria.[3] Rouvier thereupon declared himself willing to accept the principle of a Conference, especially as President Roosevelt urgently advised it. Bülow now became more conciliatory. It was a load off his mind that the danger, so lightheartedly conjured up, had blown over. He believed that the decisions of the Conference would not give occasion for war, as Germany in any case could always shift her responsibility on to the Sultan. Hence he anticipated no special difficulties.[1] He had told the French Ambassador that all that was now desired was a loyal effort towards the international fulfilment of the necessary reforms. That had not succeeded in Turkey and would probably fail also in Morocco. If that proved to be the case, a new situation would arise. "Therefore the future is free. In the future, which is perhaps not very distant, we might again become opportunists. To-day, however, we are pledged." Between France and Germany, therefore, it was just a question of the right time. Holstein, indeed, believed that the road to a complete understanding with France was now free; we could help to extend her claims at the Conference against a third party provided the future was kept open for us also.[2]

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[1] Flotow, June 7th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 406).

[2] Despatch to Radolin, June 10th and 12th. Radolin, June 11th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 438, 451).

[3] Radolin, June 14th, 18th, 21st. Despatch to Radolin, June 16th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 438, 439, 446, 452).

This estimate of things proved to be wholly erroneous. The humiliation to which France had been exposed had been deeply resented in Paris, though it did not reveal itself openly. The exchange of notes between France and Germany by which the French acceptance of the Conference was made known publicly, showed that essential agreement had been secured on the following leading points: the sovereignty and independence of the Sultan, the integrity of his empire, the economic equality of all nations, the necessity for police and financial reforms on the basis of international agreement, and finally, France's special interests, as a frontier neighbour, in the maintenance of order throughout the whole of Morocco. In this last stipulation France's right to a privileged position was recognised by Germany.[3] But in Berlin they were still lulling themselves with the hope that France would entrust the police reforms on the Atlantic coast to Germany. It was furthermore agreed that until the close of the Conference neither of the two Powers would grant the Sultan a loan, nor claim special economic concessions for itself. In the preliminary negotiations it was arranged that both Powers should agree on a programme for the deliberations and together recommend it to the Sultan, and new and wearisome discussions now began over the formulae. Things were very difficult at the outset, as Count Tattenbach, in flagrant disregard of the terms agreed upon, had negotiated for the Sultan a loan of ten million francs in Germany, in return for which he had asked for the right to build certain harbour works for a German company. The Ambassador Rosen, who was to represent Germany in Morocco, but had not yet entered upon his duties, was entrusted by Bülow with the conduct of the negotiations in Paris. With some difficulty he succeeded in pacifying the French by offering to divide the loan between the German and the French banks and to procure for a French company similar concessions for the work under construction at Casablanca. He further consented to the Conference being held, not in Tangier, to which the French objected, but in the town of Algeciras, in Southern Spain. When the French negotiator, Révoil, brought forward a proposal for a direct understanding to the exclusion of the Conference, he began a discussion on the matter, but rejected as insufficient the compensations offered by France—the relinquishment of the protection of the Christians in the East and admission of the shares in the Bagdad railway to the Paris Stock Exchange. About the eventual improvement of the Cameroon frontiers he could not negotiate, as the Colonial Office had expressed no definite wishes on that matter. So it must remain over for the Conference. During the negotiations the Russian Finance Minister, Witte, arrived in Paris, and on being informed by Prince Radolin of the position of affairs, he sought to induce the German representative to be as accommodating as possible. On the French side, since the humiliating episode of Delcassé's fall, there had been little inclination to make actual concessions. They evidently counted definitely on having the majority on their side at the Conference.

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[1] Sternburg, June 25th. Despatch to Sternburg, June 26th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 473, 475).

[2] Bülow to the Kaiser, June 26th. Holstein to Radolin, June 28th. Bülow's description, July 1st (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 476, 490, 497).

[3] Radolin, July 1st to 8th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 493-514). The exchange of notes began on July 8th. There was a great deal of negotiation over the clause referred to above, the final text of which ran as follows: "through the special interests which thereby arise for the two neighbouring countries (France and Morocco) and through the particular interest that thence results for France in the maintenance of order in the Sherifian Empire."

It was only on September 28th that the agreement as to the programme for the Conference was signed at Paris. The Kaiser had previously, through Witte (whose information was very one-sided), expressed the wish that this "petty wrangling" about trifles should now cease; one ought to make the retreat as easy as possible for Rouvier, he declared, and not attempt to prescribe conditions in advance which should only be discussed at the Conference.[1] We shall see what prompted him to interfere. In the programme the subjects for consideration were defined in general terms as the police force, the suppression of smuggling of arms, the reform of the finances, the opening up of new sources of revenue, the Sultan's undertaking not to part with any branch of the public service for the benefit of private interests, and the allotment of contracts for public works irrespective of nationality. A few minor disputes of a local nature were also regulated. The signing of the agreement was followed by an incident somewhat embarrassing for Germany. When Bülow, through Prince Radolin at Paris, and Dr. Rosen, the local representative, expressed the German Government's willingness to negotiate also over other colonial matters, such as the frontiers of the Cameroons and the question of the Bagdad railway, Rouvier coldly replied that he had previously offered to do that so as to avoid a Conference and to settle the Morocco question in a friendly manner between France and Germany alone. They could not return to that now till it was seen how the Conference turned out.[2]

After prolonged opposition, the Sultan finally accepted the programme on October 23rd.[3] The formal invitations were to be issued by the King of Spain as the Conference was being held on Spanish soil. A temporary settlement of the Morocco problem had been attained. What had Germany really wanted in this matter and what had she gained? Officially she wanted the maintenance of the situation previously created by the Act of Madrid, the complete independence of the Sultan and absolute economic equality of all nations. Legally, the German standpoint, that none of these provisions could be altered without the consent of all the signatories of the Act of Madrid, was indisputable. Whether it was wise for her politically to entrench herself behind the Madrid paragraphs is a different matter, for in Berlin they were convinced that the *status quo* in Morocco could not be maintained. They clearly realised the internal corruption of the Sherifian Empire, the inefficiency of international control, the impossibility of ultimately preventing the partitioning of the territory between France and Spain, and in that case of saving even economic equality. What therefore did they wish? In the first place, for the sake of their prestige, not to be left out without being consulted, secondly, in return for consent, to get compensation somewhere. The Spanish island, Fernando Po, was thought of for a moment. From France they were specially desirous of concessions in the Cameroons and support for the Bagdad railway, but without being absolutely clear as to what to ask for; nor had they quite given up the idea of a strip of the Morocco sea-board. However, since the Kaiser's protestations of disinterestedness and the promises to the Sultan made a bald statement of such demands inadmissible, they attempted to confuse the situation and win time, so as to seize a favourable opportunity later on to sell their acquiescence to France at the highest price possible. So the opportunity was let slip when something might have been got from France. The Conference was to be the means of releasing us from our earlier promises in the eyes of the Sultan and of the world. It was to put an end to the attempt at international control which they were previously convinced was unworkable, so as to be able to say: Germany had redeemed her word by carrying through this effort; if it proved impracticable, everyone, including ourselves, would then be free again. These, and not the petty side issues, the influence of our representatives on the spot limited to the local point of view, and similar considerations, were the fundamental features of Germany's policy in Morocco in 1905, as formulated by Holstein and accepted by Bülow, but probably never clearly presented to the Kaiser. He instinctively disapproved of the policy from the beginning, and would probably have put a stop to it had he really understood it. The dangers of this policy seem not to have been realised or else to have been greatly underestimated. Without intending it we had been on the verge of war with France and possibly with England too. France had been deeply offended, though not actually injured, at the very moment when the Kaiser and Bülow were earnestly endeavouring to gain the Republic as an ally. For our Morocco policy can only be seen in its true perspective when we look at the same time at two contemporary events, the naval battle of Tsushima and the treaty of Björkö.

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[1] The Kaiser to Bülow, September 27th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 508).

[2] Radolin, September 29th, October 18th. Bülow to Rosen, September 30th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 593, 595, 596).

[3] Tattenbach, October 23rd (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 6).

While we had been wrangling with France in Morocco an event of vast significance had been happening in the Far East. On May 27th and 28th, the Russian fleet which had reached the Far East after the greatest difficulties and was to wrest the supremacy of the Yellow Sea from the Japanese and to end the great struggle in Russia's favour, was annihilated by the Japanese in the Straits of Tsushima. The sea route for the transport of Japanese troops to the Asiatic mainland was thereby kept open, and Russia's last hope of final victory was shattered. The most one could hope for was that Japan, whose physical and financial resources had been strained to the utmost, would be exhausted before Russia and that the war would gradually come to a standstill. But it was doubtful whether Russia was likely under these conditions to obtain an advantageous peace. For a long time past President Roosevelt had been striving for intervention. He had been ceaselessly endeavouring since spring to learn from both combatants the conditions they demanded, only to find that they were irreconcilable. Russia was prepared to abandon Korea and Manchuria to Japanese influence, but neither to cede any of her own territory nor to pay an indemnity, whereas Japan insisted on both these conditions.[1] The German Government had constantly encouraged President Roosevelt to persevere in these efforts, but had declined his invitation to join with him,[2] as the Kaiser wished to spare the Czar's feelings, and indeed was afraid of a revolution in Russia and the fall of the monarchy. As far back as March the Kaiser had sorrowfully admitted to the English Ambassador that peace was only possible if Port Arthur were surrendered to the Japanese. Practical politics, he said, compelled him to recognise that Japan had proved herself worthy to be regarded as a civilised Great Power. Posterity would decide whether the picture his imagination had drawn ten years previously was true or not.[3] Berlin's great anxiety was lest England

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[1] Sternburg, March 18th, 21st, 31st, April 2nd, May 19th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 581-591, 603).

[2] Despatches to Sternburg, March 22nd, 23rd (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 583, 585).

[3] Despatch to Arco, March 14th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 412).

and France should take a hand in the peace negotiations; if they were successful, not only would the Entente be confirmed, but the way would be paved for a quadruple alliance of England, France, Russia and Japan, which, with the forces at its disposal, would be able to dominate the world and carry through the allotting of the territories still remaining to the exclusion of the other Powers.[1] So now possibilities were being seriously considered which only a short time back would have been rejected as absolutely out of the question.

The news of the battle of Tsushima convinced German statesmen that it was now high time for Russia to conclude peace. At all costs the Entente must be kept out of it. Hence on June 3rd the Kaiser decided to telegraph to Roosevelt,[2] offering to support the President in his representations to the Czar. At the same time he wrote a long letter to the Czar urging the bitter necessity of ending this war, so unpopular with his own subjects, and emphasising the fact that President Roosevelt, for whom the Japanese had a great respect, was the most likely person to have a restraining influence on them and induce them to moderate their demands.[3] Roosevelt thereupon offered the Czar his good services to open direct communication with Japan for peace negotiations.[4] But the Russian Ministers were not yet prepared to go so far, and the Russian Ambassador at Washington received orders to decline all offers of intervention.[5] Shortly afterwards, however, the Czar gave to the American Ambassador, who had handed him the President's telegram, his consent to open negotiations on the two-fold condition that his consent was kept strictly secret until Japan had also agreed, and that the discussion should be broken off at once if Japan brought forward unreasonable terms.[6] There is no doubt that it was the Kaiser's letter which brought about this change in the Czar's attitude. Roosevelt was convinced of it and said so to the Japanese. He thanked the Kaiser for his support and asked him to induce the Czar to consider the Japanese conditions, since he was now defeated, and nothing was to be gained by prolonging the war.[1] Japan at once expressed her willingness for negotiations. While the necessary arrangements as to the place and the choice of plenipotentiaries were being made, which took up several weeks, the Kaiser and the Czar had the opportunity of meeting privately. In the month of June, accompanied by small suites, they both went for a holiday in the Baltic. The Kaiser suggested to his cousin a confidential and strictly private interview, which the Czar gladly accepted, and on July 23rd the meeting took place at Björkö in Finland.[2]

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[1] Despatches to Sternburg, January 4th, February 5th, May 16th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 556, 558, 600 f.).

[2] Telegram to Roosevelt, June 3rd (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 607).

[3] Kaiser to the Czar, June 3rd (Goetz, 183). Despatch to Alvensleben, June 9th.

[4] Sternburg, June 5th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 608).

[5] Sternburg, June 9th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 609).

[6] Sternburg, June 9th and 12th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 609 and 611).

On the second day of the meeting the Kaiser took advantage of a general political conversation to voice the suspicion that France and England might have concluded behind Russia's back private agreements concerning the Far East. He then asked why the proposed treaty in the previous autumn had fallen through ? The Czar declared that France was not willing to co-operate with Germany in view of the strained relations between them. The Kaiser replied that this obstacle no longer existed ; since the Morocco agreement he was acting in concert with France so that they could now revert to the earlier idea. When the Czar remarked that he no longer remembered accurately the text of the proposals then submitted, the Kaiser replied that he happened to have a copy of them with him, and drawing it out of his pocket, he gave it to the Czar, who thereupon pulled the Kaiser into his private cabin, shut all the doors himself, and read the manuscript through several times. He then declared that he wholly approved the contents. The Kaiser, who had watched him with a prayer on his lips, now proposed that they should both sign the treaty forthwith, and as the Czar had no objection, this was done. The witnesses were von Tschirschky, the diplomatic envoy accompanying the Kaiser, and Admiral Birileff of the Czar's suite. The Czar's younger brother, the Grand Duke Michael, then heir to the throne, was the only other person admitted to the secret.[3] The idea of taking advantage of the meeting with the Czar for the final conclusion of the Russo-German alliance evidently occurred to the Kaiser during his voyage. Fourteen days previously, when he said good-bye to Bülow at Sassnitz, he had indeed mentioned the possibility of a meeting with the Czar, and there had been some general talk of how important it would be to have an agreement with Russia, but it was only shortly before the meeting that the Kaiser telegraphed to Berlin for the text of the old treaty. At the outset when the Kaiser telegraphed his intentions Bülow had willingly acquiesced, because he approved of tying the Czar down so far that he would be the less susceptible to probable overtures from England on the conclusion of peace. In an exhaustive exchange of opinions by telegram he had already discussed the various points with Holstein before sending the Kaiser the text of the treaty. Although a certain reluctance was noticeable, Holstein also favoured this plan. He evidently felt that he could not hinder the Kaiser from discussing the question of an alliance with the Czar, and so he advised the former not to introduce the subject himself but to leave it to the Czar. Holstein also advised leaving out of the draft the conditions making the treaty operative if one of the two Powers were attacked by one European Power, and instead to say " by two Powers," without limiting it to Europe. He considered this more advantageous, as there was little likelihood of Russia being attacked simultaneously by two Powers. Also he advised insisting, as in the previous autumn, that Russia should conclude the treaty without previously consulting France, as its existence might thereby be seriously imperilled. It is difficult to understand how he could expect the plan to succeed if it were to be dependent on France's consent. It is possible he was all along secretly hoping that the scheme would fall through. Bülow followed his advice, but was extremely discreet in his telegram to the Kaiser in which he only said: " On the other hand we are willing to agree that in Article I. the words ' par une puissance européenne ' should be replaced by the words ' par deux puissances ' (without ' européennes ')." Holstein's reminder of the condition required in the previous autumn regarding France he ignored.[1]

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[1] Roosevelt to the American Ambassador Tower, June 24th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 612).

[2] Cf. exchange of telegrams (*Documents from the Russian Secret Archives*, 345 ; *Grosse Politik*, xix. 435).

[3] The Kaiser to Bülow, July 24 and 25th. Tschirschky to Bülow, July 24th.

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[1] *Vide* the exchange of telegrams between Bülow and Holstein, July 20th-24th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 435-451).

The Kaiser paid no heed to this suggestion. He not only adhered to the original form of the first article, but, though Tschirschky protested because the Imperial Chancellor had not been consulted, he added the reservation that the duty of mutual help should be limited to Europe. He considered it better for Germany not to be bound to lend Russia active support in Asia. The first article now ran as follows: "In the event of one of the two Empires being attacked by a European Power, her Ally would help her in Europe by land and by sea with all her forces." The second article, which excluded any separate peace, he left untouched; but he added a third article which was entirely new: "The present treaty takes effect from the moment at which a peace is concluded between Russia and Japan and remains in force until it is terminated by one year's notice." Article 4 bound the Czar, as already agreed upon, to induce France to join with them.

The Czar agreed to everything, for he felt himself deserted by France and all the world. As the Kaiser said, he was in a mood in which he would have subscribed to far different terms. He told the Kaiser with the tears streaming from his eyes, that he was the only human being in whom he had real confidence. The Kaiser was greatly elated. He believed God had shown him the way and prospered his work. He imagined the episode at Björkö to be one of the great turning-points in the world's history. In his imagination he already pictured the lesser European States—even Japan—members of this alliance. He discussed with the Czar the question of neutralising Denmark under a Russo-German guarantee with the right for both protecting Powers to occupy Danish waters in the event of war. But this delight was all too soon utterly destroyed.

On receipt of the first telegram from the Kaiser announcing the signing of the treaty, Bülow had immediately expressed his "deep emotion and heartfelt gratitude." "Your Majesty is to be congratulated on this success, for your Majesty alone has made this development possible and carried it through." But when he learned the text of the treaty he began to have doubts whether limiting it to Europe would not rob it of value for Germany, for Russia, with her defeated fleet and her enfeebled army, could not help us effectively against England. He then thought of utilising the technical fault of omitting the Imperial Chancellor's signature in order to discredit the treaty. At first Holstein had declared the alliance even in its new form to be useful, but after receiving a detailed report he spoke as if the Czar's favourable mood might have been used to better advantage. The addition "in Europe" only benefited Russia, and the new final article making the treaty operative only after the conclusion of peace with Japan, was in many ways dangerous. Confirmed in his own doubts by these remarks of Holstein, Bülow now raised objections with the Kaiser to the words "in Europe." He considered that the only way Russia could help us in a war with England was by attacking in India and Persia.[1] The Kaiser and the Chief of the General Staff were unanimous in condemning this as impracticable. The Kaiser considered that Russia's value to us lay in her keeping our rear free in Europe.[2] Suddenly Bülow, who at first had stated his objections in the form of doubts, decided to tender his resignation as he felt unequal to bear any longer the responsibility for Germany's policy when the Kaiser made decisions in such momentous matters without first consulting him.[3] He did this although both he and Holstein considered that the treaty, in spite of this defect, offered overwhelming advantages, especially in that it prevented Russia from joining the other Powers in a Quadruple Alliance ; Holstein even thought that any further demand for alteration might imperil the whole Alliance. There can scarcely be any other explanation of Bülow's conduct than that he thought this a favourable opportunity to establish autocratic control of affairs and to force the Kaiser to promise not to interfere in future on his own initiative.

The Kaiser was completely taken aback. He reminded Bülow of all their work in common, of the honours he had bestowed on him—only shortly before he had made him a Prince—of the trifling nature of the matter in dispute, of his compliance with him in his ill-starred Morocco policy. "Do not forget that you sent me personally against my will to Tangier in order to score a success in your Morocco policy." He declared that his nervous system was over-wrought and that he felt on the verge of a break-down.[1] If he had really made a mistake he had done so in good faith. If Bülow were to leave now, the whole policy of these last years would be discredited and he himself (the Kaiser) would be for ever blamed, "which I could not survive. The morning after the handing in of your resignation would find the Kaiser no longer in life." This was the mood which the Chancellor had wished to induce in the Kaiser. He kept him in suspense for a little while longer and then after an exhaustive discussion he withdrew his threat to resign. What pledges the Kaiser granted by word of mouth are not known, but Bülow in any case now felt himself firm in the saddle and declared that the Kaiser would do whatever he advised him.[2] On account of the words in the treaty to which Bülow objected it was suggested, in spite of Holstein's scruples, that the Kaiser should sound the Czar by letter as to his consent to a further alteration. However, this was postponed for the moment, a sign that the Chancellor himself did not consider the matter very urgent.[3]

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[1] Tschirschky to Bülow, July 27th. Bülow to the Kaiser, July 27th. Holstein to Bülow, July 26th. Memorandum from Holstein, July 28th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 468-476).

[2] The Kaiser to Bülow, July 30th. Bülow to the Kaiser, July 30th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 477).

[3] Bülow to the Foreign Office, August 2nd ; to Holstein, August 5th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 481, 487). The request to resign is not in the Foreign Office archives.

The Kaiser's first disappointment was fated soon to be followed by a second and even more disagreeable one. On August 7th the Russian and Japanese plenipotentiaries met in the American town of Portsmouth. The negotiations lasted the whole of August and were several times on the point of breaking down, as Russia still refused to cede any territory and pay compensation, whereas Japan insisted on receiving the island of Saghalien and a war indemnity. It required all President Roosevelt's powerful influence with the Japanese and that of the Kaiser (at the President's request) with the Czar before the final difficulties were removed.[4] Japan renounced the indemnity and Russia gave up South Saghalien. On these terms an agreement was reached by the end of August, and on September 3rd the treaty of peace was signed. It was hard enough for Russia for it compelled her to renounce Manchuria and Korea and the territory of Liaotung, hitherto leased by her, also Port Arthur and Dalny to Japan. The Kaiser had advised the Czar to carry through as early as possible the projected law for the establishment of a National Assembly so that the treaty could be submitted to it for final ratification. If the treaty were accepted, as was likely, the Assembly would share the responsibility and the Czar would not then stand forth alone before his people as the one who was imposing on them an unfavourable peace. The Czar nevertheless did not follow this advice, as he was not prepared to delegate to the Duma such an influential position at the outset. Witte, the head of the Russian plenipotentiaries at Portsmouth, returned home by Paris, where he sought, at the request of France, to intervene in order to help in the still unfinished negotiations with Germany over the programme for the Morocco Conference. He advised the German representatives to show themselves more compliant, as otherwise they would simply be playing into England's hands.[1] Witte was seriously alarmed at the conclusion of a new Anglo-Japanese alliance for ten years in which Korea was explicitly described as the Japanese sphere of influence and the Indian frontier as the English sphere. The inclusion of India signified a fundamental extension of Japanese liabilities. As Witte said, England had thereby acquired a land army for the defence of her Asiatic possessions. Even more significant for Germany was the fact that as England was now able to rely on the Japanese navy she could therefore recall to Europe a large number of warships then stationed in Asiatic waters. To Witte the only escape from English preponderance was the formation of a Continental League, and he considered the feeling in France just then so favourable that it ought to be turned to account.

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[1] Bülow to the Foreign Office, August 9th. The Kaiser to Bülow, August 11th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 488, 496).

[2] Bülow to Holstein, August 12th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 498).

[3] Bülow's note, August 18th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 502).

[4] Bussche, August 23rd, 28th, 31st, September 3rd. The Kaiser to the Czar, August 22nd (Goetz, 195). Despatch to Bussche, August 24th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 619, 622, 625).

From Paris Witte proceeded to Berlin, where he was received by Bülow before whom he laid these views. The Chancellor told him that the Kaiser was of the same opinion. Witte was thereupon invited to meet the Kaiser at Rominten. Bülow left it to the Kaiser's discretion whether he should tell Witte, who was looked upon as the coming man in Russia, about the Treaty of Björkö. After telegraphing for the Czar's consent, the Kaiser himself admitted the Russian Minister into the great secret. As he afterwards told Bülow, the tears stood in Witte's eyes and he was so overcome by emotion and delight as to be unable to speak at first. Then he exclaimed, "God be praised"; he would never have dared to hope for that. Now France must be gradually won over and till then the treaty must be kept secret.[1] Witte is too little known and his character too difficult to understand for it to be possible to say whether he was absolutely sincere or not. He was possibly speculating on his chances of help from the German money market for the large loan which Russia required and which had met with a poor response in London. He impressed the Kaiser as a man of exceptional shrewdness, foresight and energy. Also he was an enthusiastic supporter of the Kaiser's pet scheme at that time, the idea that America should form the flank for the Continental League. It was these conversations with Witte that induced the Kaiser to intervene as already related in the negotiations at Paris over the programme for the Conference.

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[1] Radolin, September 23rd and 24th. Rosen, September 22nd (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 582, 583, 579).

The Kaiser was so sure of success after his talk with Witte that he proposed to the Czar that, as soon as peace had been ratified, the Ambassadors of both Powers should be notified at all the Courts that they were always to co-operate and always to inform one another of their instructions and ideas.[2] On October 14th the Treaty of Peace was ratified, and so the time had arrived when the Treaty of Björkö was to become valid. Shortly before that, however, the Czar wrote to the Kaiser that the treaty was a document of immense value, but it must be further defined. Unfortunately, at Björkö he had not the existing agreements with France at hand, but these must not be infringed. The first overtures to France had shown that the matter was going to prove very difficult, because there was a danger of driving France into the arms of their enemies; also the secret might be betrayed in Paris. Hence he thought there ought to be absolute secrecy until France had decided to co-operate; if she ended by refusing, then the two articles in dispute must be altered so as to make them compatible with the Dual Alliance Treaty.[1] The old objections which we had encountered in the negotiations during the previous winter were brought up again. Count Lamsdorff had evidently recalled them to the Czar's recollection. It was through him also that the French Government had already been secretly apprised of the essential contents of the treaty. From Paris the news filtered through to England so that they were fully instructed there as to the efforts of German policy to bring about a Continental federation.

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[1] Bülow to the Kaiser, September 25th. The Kaiser to Bülow, September 26th and 27th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 505, 508).

[2] The Kaiser to the Czar, September 26th (Goetz, 206). This idea was suggested by Witte. *Vide* the account given in Witte's *Erinnerungen*, p. 273. He maintains he did not know the text of the Björkö Treaty, and that he looked upon the Kaiser's proceedings as an attempt to safeguard Germany against France without any cost to himself or even to expand towards the west with Russia's help. But, "man proposes, God disposes." He was evidently not prepared to support this policy. When he saw the text at St. Petersburg, he continues, he and Count Lamsdorff at once felt that a treaty which bound Russia to fight on the German side in a Franco-German war was felony towards France, and that such a treaty would also be worthless for Russia, who in a war with England could only be attacked in Asia, because Germany in that case was not bound to help. The Czar had been "bamboozled" by William and must be persuaded to withdraw.

On October 12th the Kaiser replied that Russia's obligations towards France were only valid so long as the latter conducted herself in accordance with them. Delcassé's attempt in alliance with England to conjure up a war with Germany had been a serious matter. He wished to be protected against any repetition of such an experience. It certainly would demand time and patience to win over France. But in any case their treaty had been signed by both of them and sealed by their clasped hands, in the sight of God, who had heard their solemn vow. If the Czar wanted some special alterations he would willingly consider more detailed proposals; but the old text must stand good until further deliberations. "What is written, is written, and God is our witness."[2] The Czar, who evidently found the whole matter very distasteful, replied, after long delay, on November 23rd, that he proposed to add the following article: "In view of the difficulties which would be caused by the immediate inclusion of the French Government in the treaty of alliance signed at Björkö, it is agreed that the first article in this document does not apply in the event of a war between Germany and France, and that the mutual obligations which bind the latter Power to Russia remain absolutely valid until the formation of a union of the three Powers." The Kaiser sent the letter to Bülow with the remark that at least the Czar had come out of his shell. His proposal was a direct cancelling of the treaty in the event of a Franco-German war. Such was their thanks to us for our attitude in these last years. He thought we should now seek for ourselves to win over France. To the Czar he replied that he could not accept the view that the Dual Alliance bound Russia to support France in an attack on Germany. The old Czar had always opposed that view. If the Dual Alliance were purely defensive, there was then no contradiction between the two treaties.[1] The Czar replied curtly that the treaty with France was purely defensive ; in his opinion the article proposed by him should hold good until France had definitely joined them.[2] As Germany attached no value to a treaty of that kind, the agreement at Björkö thereby became so much waste paper.

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[1] The Czar to the Kaiser, October 7th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 512).

[2] The Kaiser to the Czar, October 12th (*Documents from the Russian Secret Archives*, 353); to Bülow, October 12th (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 513).

But now France demanded stronger guarantees from Russia of her unreserved adherence to the Dual Alliance. Owing to the Czar's feebleness of character and vacillation what had failed this time might succeed next time. The real danger seemed to lie in the close personal alliance of the two monarchs, which in accordance with custom was reflected in the military plenipotentiaries attached to each other's personal suite.

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[1] The Czar to the Kaiser, November 23rd. The Kaiser to Bülow, November 26th. The Kaiser to the Czar, November 28th. Goetz, 214 (*Grosse Politik*, 19. 522-526).

[2] The Czar to the Kaiser, December 2nd (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 527). For a long time yet the fiction was kept up on the German side that the Björkö treaty still held good in spite of the Czar's withdrawal. In a report drawn up by Bussche, legal adviser to the Legation, for the Emperor's use in preparation for his meeting with the Czar at Swinemünde, and submitted to the Imperial Chancellor on July 15th, 1907, the passage occurs, "we still possess the defensive treaty for Germany and Russia, signed by the two Sovereigns at Björkö on July 24th, 1905. His Majesty the Emperor did not agree to the declaration concerning France which H.M. the Czar wished to add, as, according to the Czar's statement, the Franco-Russian Alliance is purely defensive in character, therefore it does not conflict with the German-Russian defensive treaty. Russia was thereby tranquillised." This statement completely misrepresents the real substance of the case. Subsequently there seems to have been no further word of the treaty.

The Republic had no similar bond of union with the Czar. This must be rectified. On France's request a French general was attached to the Czar's suite. The Czar informed the Kaiser of this arrangement, adding that he himself felt it somewhat incongruous to have a republican general in such close contact. But in view of the true significance of the Björkö treaty he had found it possible to gratify this wish. The Kaiser was furious. "Nicky," he declared, was becoming more and more childish. "And all this is done behind a tearful pretence of closest undying friendship." [1] Russia's conduct during the Algeciras Conference was calculated to shatter the last illusions of the German statesmen. Even the personal friendship between the Sovereigns had suffered a severe set-back by the Czar's withdrawal from the Björkö treaty. The exchange of letters and telegrams became less frequent and colder in tone.

An attempt inherently impossible had thus met its end. It is astonishing that not only the volatile Kaiser, but even diplomatists of ripe experience, like Bülow and Holstein, should have reckoned on it succeeding. Their ultimate aim is not quite clear. Their immediate purpose at least was to make sure of Russia, as public opinion in England was increasingly hostile. They also hoped to frustrate the formation of a Quadruple Alliance between England, France, Russia and Japan, the danger of which they at last began to see. They either hoped to be able to win over France, by Russia's help, or else they really wanted to detach Russia from France and bring her right over to the side of the Triple Alliance. Either solution suited Germany, so possibly they intended to let things run their course. But if the former plan was thought desirable it is all the more incomprehensible that France's overtures should have been rejected when Rouvier offered a colonial agreement, and that the French nation should have been angered and humiliated by the high-handed proceedings before the Conference. The Kaiser's aversion from Bülow's Morocco policy evidently arose from his well-founded belief that it lessened the chances of the Continental League which he had at heart. What use would it have been if the Czar, by threatening to cancel the Dual

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[1] The Czar to the Kaiser, January 21st, 1906. The Kaiser to Bülow, January 23rd (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 528).

Alliance, had actually succeeded in compelling France to join the Continental League? An almost compulsory alliance with an unwilling opponent could not withstand any serious strain. But if they were counting on a collapse of the Dual Alliance in consequence of the Russian pressure on France, they had gravely underestimated the strength of the relations between St. Petersburg and Paris, and also the influence of the anxious-minded Czar on Russian policy. The establishment of better relations with Russia would so far have been of value to us that it might have held France back from hostilities on her own account, or from supporting any aggressive plans of England's. The Kaiser once declared that as soon as the French were convinced that Russian bayonets would not be turned against us, they would be chary about going over to England, "whose fleet had no wheels and could be of no use to France in protecting her from us."[1] But the soaring hopes which culminated in the Björkö Treaty aimed much higher and for that reason were doomed to be unproductive. So the attempt to win over Russia ended in a cooling of the friendship. Equally unsuccessful were the constantly recurring efforts to make of the good relations with President Roosevelt which had gradually come about a basis for a more general entente with the United States. Roosevelt and the Kaiser certainly worked in harmony to restore peace between Russia and Japan; they certainly worked hand in hand for the principle of the "open door" in China and Morocco; but in the latter case the agreement was more apparent than real, for Germany's ulterior views were quite different. And whenever the question was raised of a union for the future, Roosevelt cautiously evaded it, though lavishly protesting that a good understanding between Germany, England and America seemed to him desirable. In view of the mixed nationality and the state of public opinion in his own country he could not act otherwise.

As a matter of fact, by the end of the year 1905 Germany was almost completely isolated, and the course of the Algeciras Conference was destined to make this even more apparent.

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[1] Kaiser's remark on Metternich's despatch of October 2nd, 1905 (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 662).

## X. ALGECIRAS: RUSSIA JOINS THE ENTENTE

Russia's defeat in the Far East, confirmed by the Peace of Portsmouth, must be considered one of the most decisive events of this period. It altered the political outlook of the whole world.

Japan thereby entered definitely into the circle of the Great Powers. Under the pressure of threatening war, England and France, the allies of the combatants, had come together and composed their differences in colonial matters. The course of events in Morocco had lent to their union an anti-German bias. There was the possibility that the Entente might attempt to win over Russia now that her aggressive Eastern policy, so obnoxious to England, had been brought to a standstill, and that in all probability Russia would need to overhaul in drastic fashion the policy which she had hitherto pursued in the Far East.

It was unlikely that Russia would be able for a long time to resume her Eastern plans of conquest on a large scale. The loss of prestige she had suffered would have to be made good in other places. By a sort of natural necessity Russia's political problems —Persia and the Near East—which had been forced meanwhile into the background, now came to the front and determined the direction of her general policy. During the last decade the Russian front had faced east, and her relations with Europe, Turkey and Persia appeared as a covering of her flank in the great main struggle. But now the position was reversed. The defence of what was left of her Far Eastern possessions, no longer threatened in any direction, became a comparatively insignificant task, and her front now faced to the Dardanelles and the Balkans. Since her defeats in the Far East, Russia's leading statesmen considered it absolutely indispensable for the Empire's position in the world that here, in the Near East, Russia should maintain and if possible increase her power. In home politics the struggles over the constitution had already begun and each new defeat in foreign policy threatened to destroy the authority of the Czar's rule at home.

Russia's change of front to the south-west raised a fear that the friction with Austria-Hungary, which had fallen into abeyance during the last ten years, might break out again with fresh fury. That, however, would have entailed a serious danger to Russo-German relations and in certain circumstances would have been a threat to European peace. Such a development would have meant disaster to the policy pursued by Germany since 1896. We had supported Russia to the very end in her Far Eastern ambitions, had urged her to prosecute them with all her might, and had promised to protect her rear in Europe—all with the one aim of tying her down in the Far East, so as to divert her attention from the Near East and lessen the danger of a clash with Austria. Only on this basis was it possible to realise the dream of a Continental League, binding the Triple Alliance and the Dual Alliance into a compact group of the Great European Powers against England, Japan, and eventually America. If there was any time when this goal seemed attainable it was the year immediately after the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. After the fresh rupture between France and Germany over Morocco it ceased to be possible, and the Kaiser's attempt to bring it about by causing a breach between the Czar and France was doomed to fail. But, even if this aim had actually been realised, the Peace of Portsmouth would have robbed it of any reality. German policy was based on the assumption that Russia would be victorious in the Far East, or that at least a long stern struggle with Japan would ensue which would tie up Russia's forces for a long time without destroying the hope of ultimate victory. Her final defeat and the consequent liquidation of her Far Eastern policy not only diverted Russia's energies to the Balkans but made Germany's defence of her rear superfluous.

People were not slow to tell the Czar that he had been forced into this disastrous policy by the Kaiser, who had then tried to take advantage of his dire plight by binding him to Germany and embroiling him with France, and that his unsuspecting confidence had been betrayed. Such reproaches were certainly unjustifiable. Germany had only found that it suited her interests to detain Russia in the Far East and to divert her attention from affairs in the Near East—affairs which concerned Russia no less, and in the eyes of many, far more. Henceforward the altered direction of Russia's policy was hostile to Germany. A sullen vindictive feeling had remained behind, as if Germany and her Kaiser were in some sort responsible for the defeats in China. Just because the influence of the Kaiser on the Czar had been so great, the Ministers and Grand Dukes looked upon it as an undesirable and hostile force and they were resolved never again to let it become so strong.

The new policy demanded new Ministers. On May 12th, 1906, Count Lamsdorff resigned and was succeeded by Iswolski, formerly Ambassador at Copenhagen. King Edward had already described him as the ablest of the Russian diplomatists and had probably made a point of enlisting his sympathies by showing him some small courtesies which had captivated his vain and susceptible nature. The Kaiser has asked for Iswolski as Russian Ambassador to Berlin with the evident intention of winning him over to his policy. But when the Czar made him a Minister these plans fell through. Witte also had to resign, as his domestic policy followed a different course from that approved by the Grand Dukes' party and the other Ministers.

The fact that the new direction of Russian policy did not immediately make itself felt abroad was due to the temporary weakening of the Czar's empire. The army had to be reorganised; the new constitutional form of the State, which the Czar and his advisers wished to be merely an appearance and the Liberals wished to translate into reality, brought with it fierce internal disputes and struggles; the finances were completely exhausted, the credit impaired; behind everything loomed the great problem of the land and the peasantry, a vital question in this country of peasants; and the underworld was seething with anarchy which vented itself from time to time in wild orgies of violence and assassination. An active and aggressive foreign policy was impossible for years to come, and until the country had settled down and grown stronger again, her policy was to mark time and bow to circumstances. But there was a vast difference between letting the Balkan problem sleep, as in the last decade, and preventing it, for a few years, from becoming acute again till someone was ready to tackle it.

The new grouping of the Powers made itself felt first during the Conference of Algeciras which began its sittings on January 16th, 1906. Its deliberations cannot here be reviewed in detail. In Berlin the great aim was that Germany should not be left isolated, since after she had been so pressing for the Conference that would have been rather ridiculous. They were specially desirous to prevent France from receiving a general mandate for the formation of a police force, and they wanted to obtain for Germany the organisation of the police wherever possible, but at least in one of the harbours on the Atlantic coast. In the International State Bank capital of all countries was to have an equal share. All arrangements were only to be valid for three years, so as to let France hope that if circumstances proved unfavourable, at the end of this period a fresh settlement could be made, perhaps by a separate understanding with Germany, which would raise the question of what France would formally offer.[1]

Germany was counting not only on whole-hearted support from Austria and Italy, but on a friendly attitude on the part of Russia and America. President Roosevelt was reminded that Germany was fighting in Morocco for the policy of the "open door," as they had done in common in Asia. But Roosevelt was very reserved; he said that he was being reproached for mixing in things which did not concern America; most of his fellow countrymen did not really know where Morocco was.

And Germany was not absolutely sure even of her allies. Austria, who did not want to be involved in difficulties so remote from her own interests, counselled prudence so as to avoid driving Russia over to the side of the Entente.[2] Italy, as soon appeared, was strictly bound by her earlier agreements with France and did not wish to ruin her chance for her own plans in Tripoli by alienating the Entente.

At the beginning Russia had seemed in favour of intervention. But Count Lamsdorff and Witte urgently advised yielding, so that all prospects of the great league of peace desired by both monarchs should not vanish utterly.[1] In March the Russian Government, urged by Paris, announced that they considered the French claims just and would support them.[2] Here too, therefore, there was nothing more to be expected. That England would stand by France was a foregone conclusion. In London they had not been pleased that France had consented to the Conference. At the elections in January, 1906, the Conservatives were defeated, but the new Liberal Government with Campbell-Bannerman at its head and Sir Edward Grey at the Foreign Office continued the Conservative policy on these questions. Even when the new leaders were in Opposition they had approved the conclusion of the Entente. Grey left Count Metternich under no doubt during the Morocco incident that he would support France, if need be, by armed force. Once this crisis was safely past he said he would willingly do his utmost to draw nearer to Germany.[3] He described his programme as follows: strengthening of the Entente with France and the establishment of good relations with Russia and also with Germany, as far as was compatible with due regard to France. The new Minister of War, Lord Haldane, who was regarded as friendly to Germany, declared that Germany was sure to have some claims for compensation in reserve, possibly a naval station on the Atlantic seaboard. She might at last manage to get it; France certainly could have no objection, nor could England. He added in joke that Sir John Fisher, the First Lord of the Admiralty, had said, "If we actually did have a war with Germany we should then have something to bombard!" He was probably merely seeking to find out something about the German plans.[4]

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[1] Instruction to the German plenipotentiaries, December 9th, 1905. Mühlberg's comment on a discussion in the Foreign Office, December 25th (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 38 f., 28).

[2] Bülow's note, February 24th, 1906 (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 213).

Germany had also hoped for Spain's support. There indeed they were feeling aggrieved with France and would probably have willingly joined with Germany, but under pressure of direct threats from France and England they did not venture on active support. Hence from the outset Germany's prospects were not reassuring. There was the danger of being absolutely isolated. What was to happen if the Conference produced no results? Would the Franco-German tension, which had been barely allayed, spring up afresh and the danger of a clash of arms be conjured up anew by some comparatively insignificant question?

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[1] *Vide* Schön, February 12th and 20th, 1906 (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 156 and 192).

[2] Despatch to Schön, March 22nd (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 312).

[3] Metternich, January 3rd and 4th, February 19th (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 45 and 51).

[4] Metternich, February 20th (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 179 and 185).

Various preliminary matters were easily settled. But thereafter France demanded a privileged position in the Bank and also that the latter should be placed under her jurisdiction. Furthermore, she wished to reserve the organisation of the police exclusively for herself and Spain in the spheres of interest agreed upon. Thereupon the German representative declared that he must insist on proper international control of these matters, and threatened to break up the Conference if the French insisted on their demands.

The situation was further complicated in the beginning of March by the fall of Rouvier, who had always worked for an understanding with Germany. The soul of the new Bourgeois Ministry was Georges Clemenceau, Germany's bitterest foe, the leader of the policy of revenge.[1] Slowly and reluctantly France consented to a few small concessions, and towards the end of March the discussions had practically finished. On April 8th the Algeciras Act was ready for signing. The results obtained were as follows. The police force to be created for the eight harbours of Morocco was to be staffed by French and Spanish officers appointed for five years. The supreme command was to be vested in an Inspector-General to be appointed by Switzerland and resident in Tangier. The supervision of the Bank was to lie with four censors to be appointed by France, England, Spain and Germany; of the fifteen Bank agencies France received three, the other Powers one each; complaints against the Bank were to be decided in the last instance by the Swiss Federal Tribunal in Lausanne.

Although it was announced officially that a satisfactory compromise had been arranged at Algeciras whereby there was neither conqueror nor conquered, and although Bülow affirmed that Germany's legal status had been triumphantly upheld, the majority of people regarded the issue as a defeat for Germany.

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[1] Radolin, March 14th (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 291).

Her isolation had been very noticeable. Austria alone had doubtfully and reluctantly supported German policy. Italy had plainly shown her inclination not to spoil her chances either with the Triple Alliance or with the Entente and so had acquired a sort of central position. Russia had identified herself whole-heartedly with France. The result of all these efforts was that the sovereignty of the Sultan and the economic equality of all nations had again been officially recognised—which France had always been willing to allow—but the organisation of the police and the restoration of order were entrusted exclusively to France, whose privileged position had actually been acknowledged in advance by Germany.

In Berlin they believed that they had at least kept the way open for the future. They had been relieved of their promise to the Sultan. If, as was probable, the forces at his disposal failed to restore peace and order, then Germany was free from blame. What we had to do now was to wait till the failure of the projected reforms had become apparent, and until France had seen for herself that she could not settle matters in Morocco without Germany's consent—then would be the time for us; to begin enquiries at Paris as to the price of this consent; then, released from our earlier promises by the holding of the Conference, we could formulate our demands without laying ourselves open to the reproach of breaking our word. It must not be forgotten that the whole Morocco policy of Bülow and Holstein was not approved by the Kaiser. He was left in complete ignorance of Rouvier's offer, in the summer of 1905, of a general colonial agreement. Two years later, when he learned of it in a conversation with Prince Radolin, he sent for the documents and remarked, "Had I known of it, I would have agreed to it instantly, and the whole of this stupid Algeciras Conference would never have taken place." [1]

Before the signing of the Algeciras document Herr von Holstein, the secret director of our policy since 1890, left the scene of his activity, his departure being as unnoticed by the public generally as his whole work had been. Bülow seemed, as the Conference developed, to lose faith in the wisdom of the policy recommended by him. When he saw how Holstein's influence was making things constantly more difficult and that he was again playing with the dangerous idea of seeking to make the Conference inconclusive, he finally took the conduct of affairs into his own hands and chose other advisers. Holstein, who had been accustomed to have his edicts and advice in important matters treated as oracular, resented this and tendered his resignation, hoping probably that it would not be accepted. After von Tschirschky, the Secretary of State, who intensely disliked Holstein's influence, had, with Bülow's tacit consent, recommended its acceptance to the Kaiser, it was accepted on April 5th, 1905. Even afterwards Holstein continued to exercise a strong influence over Bülow's decisions, although he was no longer in an official position. He lived on a few years longer, an embittered man, thirsting for vengeance on those who had brought about his fall, though never condescending to revenge himself by petty indiscretions. He was convinced that all the mischief proceeded from the Kaiser and his sudden interferences; but he failed to remember that in the two most important questions he, and Bülow with him, had made the decision, and in the one case without even asking the Kaiser—in 1901, when the English overture for an alliance was hampered by restrictions which scared the English away, and in 1905, when Rouvier's offer to negotiate a general colonial agreement with France was left unheeded. The policy of the "free hand," of the "two irons" and of compensations, of which he had been an indefatigable champion, no longer suited the changed conditions of world politics. Some other method had to be found. The Morocco crisis and the Algeciras Conference weakened the Triple Alliance, but left the Dual Alliance unhurt and the Franco-English Entente materially strengthened.

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[1] Tschirschky's report of August 31st, 1907, on the subject of the despatches from Prince Radolin and von Flotow in April and May, 1905, with marginal comments by the Kaiser.

In 1904, when England and France were not on too good terms, their rapprochement did not meet with an enthusiastic welcome from public opinion in either country. The Liberals, who were then in opposition, criticised the treaty sharply, and in France Fashoda was still widely resented. The fact that France was bound to Russia, and England to Japan, and that Russia and Japan were engaged in murderous strife, made a closer approach difficult, although the very wish not to be involved in the war hastened on the understanding. The treaty of 1904 was not a proper alliance, but a clearing up of old colonial disputes and a demarcation of their respective spheres of interest. The only case in which common action against a third party was called for was if another Power disputed the boundaries as defined in the treaty, or sought to render them unworkable. This condition again could only apply in Morocco, because the settlements arranged for that country applied to a territory not wholly in possession of the Powers concluding the treaty, nor under their exclusive influence, where an interested third party might possibly bring forward claims. The Spanish demands had been anticipated and Italy had been portioned off, so that Germany was the only State likely to bring forward claims. In London they had learned from the previous negotiations with Berlin that Germany, whose economic interests here were secured by treaty, in the event of any partitioning of territory, wished to receive a share for herself, a fact of which they were also well aware in Paris. Hence the treaty might easily embody a general defence of the agreements come to, unfavourable to Germany. Nevertheless it was thought that, considering the relative insignificance of her commercial interests in Morocco, Germany would ignore what had been done. Balfour may have been perfectly sincere when he afterwards maintained that he would never have concluded the treaty if he had thought that it could lead to a serious dispute between France and Germany.[1]

Since the failure of the negotiations for an alliance, public opinion in England had been growing increasingly hostile to Germany, and we have already seen how, directly after that event, the spectre of the German Peril reared its head in the English press, the German fleet began to be regarded as a possible enemy, and the disposition of the English fleet was altered so as to be prepared for the now admitted possibility of war with Germany. The German Embassy in London drew attention to these facts in its reports to Berlin. From 1904 onwards, Metternich and Count Bernstorff, Counsellor of the Embassy, kept pointing to the fact that Germany and her growing fleet were viewed with suspicion and credited with evil designs on England and her colonies, and even with the systematic preparation for a military and economic struggle.[1] Already the question was being argued in the press whether England should not anticipate matters and destroy the German fleet while to do so was still an easy matter. Our Ambassador was convinced that war was desired neither by the vast majority of the English nation, nor by the King, who wished to be remembered by posterity as a peace-maker and was at heart friendly to Germany; and he believed that such plans held by a few irresponsible personages would exercise no influence on practical politics; nevertheless feeling in Berlin ran so high that towards the end of 1904 defensive measures were seriously contemplated against a sudden attack.[2] In a public speech on February 3rd, 1905, Lord Lee, a Civil Lord of the Admiralty, declared that the Germans ought to be forbidden any further development of their fleet, but if war came about in spite of all, the German fleet would be destroyed before we had time to read the declaration of war in the newspapers. Bülow, too, then wondered if England had not hostile intentions, and what were the objectives for the sake of which she believed that she needed to fight us? He looked to the Far East,[3] although, as we know, he himself guided the first conflict into quite a different channel.

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[1] Metternich, January 31st, 1907 (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 470).

In the spring of 1905 Germany gave notice of her claim to have a voice in the decision as to the future of Morocco. In London they were not willing to allow this and decided to support France in her resistance to it. England was not bound by treaty to give more than diplomatic support. But this would have been useless unless followed by deeds if things became serious. Just how far the English Government and King Edward personally went in their promises cannot be ascertained with absolute certainty until the English documents relating to the incident have been published. At the opening of the Conference many people in England were convinced that Germany was only seeking a pretext for a war with France. King Edward considered our attitude at least a demonstration against the Entente.[1] If France were attacked, England was resolved to intervene with armed force to uphold the treaty of 1904, so the English Ministers remarked repeatedly to the French representatives and to ours also; on that point there is no doubt whatever.[2] Whether definite measures had been discussed or not we cannot say. That there was any actual arrangement for action against Germany has been definitely contradicted from the English side.[3] In any case no further treaty-made agreements were entered into. Whether England had sought, in view of the danger of war, to restrain France from accepting the German summons to a conference, remains for the present undecided. After Delcassé's revelations in the press, although they were denied, Germany bitterly resented the fact that England had been ready to wage war against us about a matter which did not directly affect her own interests, merely for the sake of France.[4] This mood explains the Kaiser's words at the unveiling of the Moltke Memorial, that the sword must be kept sharp and the powder dry and all our forces united, then and afterwards often unjustly quoted as proof of his warlike intentions.

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[1] Metternich, November 13th, 1904. Count Bernstorff, September 6th, 1904, and 22nd April, 1905 (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 218, and xx. 609).

[2] Bülow's note, November 29th. Opinions of Klehmet and Holstein, December 3rd and 4th, 1904 (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 357).

[3] Despatch to Sternburg, February 5th and March 29th, 1905 (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 568).

The crisis passed over. England's unhesitating support of France's claims had made the Entente popular in France and reconciled the Nationalist circles to the new political development. They were convinced that Germany had wanted war and had only given way when she saw that England stood firmly by her ally. French self-confidence increased; thanks to the Entente they felt that they need no longer fear Germany even if Russia were unable or unwilling to help. In England public opinion approved the Government's defence of the treaties previously concluded. In Algeciras also, through its clever and adroit repretative, Sir Arthur Nicolson, who was not friendly to Germany, the Government upheld the French to the utmost of its power. This attitude was not due solely to the conditions imposed by the treaty but to the general political situation. Russia had been defeated by Japan and weakened by internal dissensions and in all probability crippled for a long time to come. Germany, even without the direct help of her allies, was by herself far superior in military strength to France, and there was always a fear lest she should take advantage of this circumstance to annihilate France utterly.[1] What would happen to England then?

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[1] Metternich, August 14th, 1905, and January 4th, 1906. The Kaiser to Bülow, December 29th, 1905 (about a conversation with A. Beit) (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 651, 690 and xxi. 51).

[2] Bernstorff, May 1st, 1905; Metternich, August 14th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 618, 651).

[3] Metternich, June 28th, 1905 (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 635).

[4] The Kaiser to Bülow, December 29th, 1905. Metternich, November 2nd, 1905 (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 690 and 672).

General von Moltke, the Chief of the German General Staff, in February, 1906, gave the Imperial Chancellor the following picture of English ideas based on information which had reached him. England could not and would not tolerate a German victory on the Continent. From the English point of view that would lead to the permanent occupation of Belgium and the Flanders coast by Germany, and to the annexation of Holland in some shape or form, which again would be a serious drawback to English commerce and greatly increase the danger of invasion. England would need to make powerful efforts to protect herself from such risks. Furthermore, she would be compelled thereby to keep her army permanently at home, which would leave India insufficiently guarded. Also the fleet would no longer be adequate.

> "England's existence therefore demanded her intervention in a continental war in order to prevent such a German preponderance—unless the German Government were ready to declare itself willing to guarantee unreservedly the independence of Holland and Belgium, even if Belgium were forced by circumstances to annex herself to France. That the fulfilment of such requirements could be expected from a victorious Germany was out of the question."

Hence if the guarantee were not given before the outbreak of war, England would be obliged to attack not only with her fleet, but also by landing an army, if she were successful in defeating the German fleet, in Schleswig or Jutland; if she were unsuccessful, on the Belgian or Dutch coast.[2]

As a matter of fact the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe and fear of a German hegemony on the Continent had been vital factors in England's policy since 1904. The conclusion of the Björkö Treaty and the Kaiser's attempt to league the Continent against England could not fail to strengthen this anxiety.

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[1] *Vide* Bernstorff, May 1st, 1905. Cf. the Kaiser's letter of December 29th (*Grosse Politik*, xx. 618, 690).

[2] General von Moltke to Bülow, February 23rd, 1906 (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 525).

The success at Algeciras, which was due to the united action of France and England, had welded the Entente even more firmly. Count Monts, referring to statements made by the English Ambassador in Rome, gave it as his opinion that the Entente was no makeshift alliance, but would probably last the lifetime of this generation at least. The Kaiser added despondently, "So then good relations with France can no longer be looked for in my generation. England and France have both been reviled in the German press, and now they are working together, and France is under England's influence." [1] About 1905 discussions were begun by the French and English General Staffs for the military co-operation of both armies and navies in the event of war, in which Germany was assumed to be the combatant enemy, and out of these grew a definite naval and military convention. It was known that even then an effort was made to include Belgium within the scope of these agreements.

As was natural in the circumstances, France then attempted to bring about a reconciliation between her old and her new friends, England and Russia. King Edward had long contemplated an understanding with Russia and had said so openly to the Imperial Chancellor at Kiel in the summer of 1904. He had foreseen the Russian defeat in the Far East, but waited till the necessary psychological conditions had been created. Now, however, the time was ripe. There was no doubt about Iswolski's readiness to face a complete liquidation of the whole position of affairs in the Far East. There was no longer any fear of impracticable Russian conditions; and that England was easy to deal with, France had proved by experience. The various phases of the Anglo-Russian understanding are not yet accurately known. On January 13th, 1905, the *Temps* had appealed for a Triple Alliance of Russia and the Entente, and the English press had received this idea favourably.[2] In the late autumn Metternich learned from Count Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador in London, that Lord Lansdowne had proposed an understanding with regard to Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet, but that the actual negotiations had not yet begun.[1] In Germany this possibility was regarded, naturally enough, as a serious menace, but they were not yet prepared to believe in its realisation. The Kaiser, who was still on terms of close intimacy with the Czar, feared rather that the English might support the Russian revolutionaries, in order to get rid of the Czar and set up a liberal Russian Government which would be in sympathy with Liberal England and with France against "reactionary" Germany.[2] Count Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador in London, who was a great favourite with King Edward, was regarded, and with justice, as the principal intermediary between London and St. Petersburg.[3]

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[1] Count Monts, March 3rd, 1906, with comments by the Kaiser (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 246).

[2] Metternich, February 5th, 1905.

The change of Government in England from Conservative to Liberal in the early part of 1906 probably delayed the negotiations with Russia, as the Liberals were more suspicious of the autocratic Czar than their predecessors. Ultimately, however, the considerations that had induced King Edward and Lord Lansdowne to enter into relations with Russia were not without influence on Campbell-Bannerman and Sir Edward Grey. Slowly and hesitatingly the two sides drew nearer. In the summer the Czar wrote to the Kaiser that England kept on harping about an understanding with regard to Central Asia, to which the Kaiser replied that Germany would welcome a settlement of the existing disputes there.

In August, 1906, shortly before the Kaiser's meeting with King Edward at Cronberg, in the Taunus, Bülow advised his master not to show any soreness about the Anglo-Russian negotiations, but at the most to express the hope that the impending agreement would show no ill-will towards Germany, since there would be a danger to peace in our isolation. This question was not directly touched on at Cronberg, but both sides expressed a desire for better relations between Germany and England.[4] Shortly afterwards, Haldane, the English Minister of War, said to one of our representatives that there was no thought of a Triple Entente, as it was recognised that such would not be "acceptable" to Germany owing to her geographical position.[1] Iswolski, who passed twice through Berlin in the month of October, speaking for Russia, declared that the negotiations with England were only beginning and dealt with much less important matters than the press would make people believe. The most urgent matter was to find a *modus vivendi* in Persia, Tibet and Afghanistan. Russia must endeavour to secure her rear against any possible fresh attack from Japan. He declared that he had requested from the first that the treaty should cause no offence to Germany and not injure the interests of a third party.[2] In Berlin they sought to conceal their uneasiness; to Austria especially they disclosed less anxiety than they felt.[3] Their immediate fear was lest England, Russia and France, acting in concert, should prevent the completion of the Bagdad railway and later on come to a settlement of the Balkan and Mediterranean questions unfavourable to the Mid-European Powers. It was felt that Russia was already seeking touch with England upon the Balkan question, not with Germany and Austria, as in previous times. These last fears were fully shared in Vienna.[4] It was not thought judicious to attempt counter measures. It might perhaps have been possible to restrain Russia, had Austria been prepared to allow her liberty of action in the Straits, but as of yore the leading statesmen in Vienna were opposed to this. Possibly, too, the Russians' desire for German capital might have been more considerately handled. But nothing was done beyond watching passively, but anxiously, how the ring was beginning to close in round Germany. Bülow himself feared that if Russia and England combined and their union assumed a form hostile to Germany, it would soon lead to a great international war, which, whatever happened, could only have undesirable results for us.[5]

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[1] Metternich, October 22nd (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 663, 668).

[2] Metternich, November 1st, with the Kaiser's comments.

[3] Bülow to Tschirschky, August 13th, 1906 (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 449).

[4] Tschirschky's note, August 15th. The Kaiser's account of his conversation with King Edward on August 15th. Bülow to the Foreign Office, August 16th (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 453).

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[1] Tschirschky to Metternich, September 4th (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 459).

[2] Schön's notes, October 13th and 30th. Mühlberg's note, October 29th, 1906.

[3] Bülow to the Kaiser, May 31st, 1906 (advice for the impending journey to Vienna). Tschirschky's account of the conversations in Vienna, June 8th (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 360, 362).

[4] Miquel, September 1st, 1906. Aehrenthal's remarks.

[5] Bülow to Metternich, November 6th, 1905 (*Grosse Politik*, xix. 671).

In the course of 1907 the new grouping of the Powers was completed on the basis of the altered situation in world politics. On May 16th Spain was affiliated to the Entente through an agreement on the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean. Then followed—doubtless through English influence—a reconciliation between the Dual Alliance and Japan. On June 10th, with Russia's knowledge and consent, a treaty was concluded between France and Japan in which both parties bound themselves to support the integrity of China and the economic equality of all nations in the Far East and guaranteed mutually their possessions there. On June 30th Russia and Japan agreed to recognise the same principles and to support the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Far East by "all peaceful means." The Japanese had also secretly given the verbal assurance that they regarded Mongolia as lying outside their sphere of influence and had no intention of obstructing Russia's activity there.[1] On August 31st the most important of these treaties was signed, that between Russia and England, concerning the frontiers of their respective spheres of influence in Asia. In Persia, special emphasis was laid on the maintenance of its political independence—the whole of the country north of Ispahan was regarded as the Russian sphere of interest, the south-eastern part as the English sphere, and the rest including the seaboard of the Persian Gulf, was to constitute a neutral sphere. Afghanistan was described by Russia as being outside her sphere of interest, while England affirmed her intention not to alter the existing condition of the country. Both countries recognised Tibet as part of the Chinese Empire; neither Power was to interfere in the internal administration of the country, nor to send diplomatic representatives to Lhassa. The arrangement then was, northern Persia for Russia, Afghanistan for England, Tibet for neither of them. When Russia agreed to restrict her predominant influence to northern Persia and to hand over Afghanistan to the English, this was not merely the result of temporary weakness, but an unmistakable sign that she wished to have her hands free elsewhere. Such are the contents of the treaty which was then published immediately. Whether or not there was any further agreement, any secret protocol to this document, as in the case of the Morocco treaties of 1904, has not been made known hitherto. But it is a striking fact that Russia and England, when engaged in clearing away all sources of friction between them, should appear to have forgotten their oldest and most dangerous difficulty, the question of the Straits and the future of Turkey. It is nevertheless possible that they avoided touching on this thorny subject lest their agreement might be wrecked by it. Even several years later there was still no harmony between the views of England and Russia on the question of the Straits.

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[1] Secret telegram of May 30th, 1907. *Documents from the Russian Secret Archives*, 116.

The dates and the contents of these treaties show clearly that a close union had now been formed between the Dual Alliance and the Anglo-Japanese group, which together formed what was later on called the big Entente, whose secret bond was said to be a common hatred of Germany, and the desire to encircle us and gradually to crush us. Prince Bülow first mentioned "encircling" in his speech in the Reichstag on November 15th, 1906. At the same time he said he hoped that the Anglo-French Entente would prove to be an alliance of a peaceful character which would not exclude the good relations of both Powers with Germany. If this were not so, if there were an attempt to encircle us, to isolate and cripple us, such pressure would inevitably call forth counter pressure and give rise to the danger of an explosion. It was a warning to the Entente Powers, not a direct accusation that they cherished such views. When the negotiations were already nearing conclusion, on April 30th, 1907, Prince Bülow again spoke in the Reichstag, describing the impending Anglo-Russian agreement as an attempt to remove ancient causes of dispute in territories lying far remote from us, which we could regard calmly, as we had no intention of seeking profit for ourselves in the disputes and difficulties of others. It looked as if he no longer entertained the fears that he had faintly outlined in the autumn. They still beset him, however, but he did not consider it wise to admit the fact to the whole world.

The other side denied all intention of encircling Germany or of any hostile purpose towards her. King Edward had frequently and zealously insisted that his whole policy aimed at maintaining and securing peace, and at eliminating, as far as possible, all sources of dangerous international friction. Similar assurances had been repeatedly given by the English and the French Ministers. Balfour said that England would never aid France in any rash attack on Germany for the re-conquest of Alsace-Lorraine. Why should Germany feel herself threatened when other Powers settled their difficulties? Had she not founded the Triple Alliance and always insisted that it constituted no menace to others? Then why not believe that other alliances likewise pursued purely defensive aims? [1]

Russia was most emphatic of all in protesting the absolute harmlessness of her intentions. Iswolski kept on affirming that Russian policy would in future be as friendly to Germany as in the past. In all questions affecting Germany's interests he would discuss matters with us before coming to a settlement with other Powers. Russia was obliged to sign the treaty with Japan because she was unable to undertake a new war, the understanding with England was also dictated by urgent necessity. There was no question of a system of alliances directed against Germany. He could definitely state that "Russia would never enter into any political coalition or combination of any sort, least of all any which openly or secretly showed or could acquire a hostile edge towards Germany." Neither the Czar nor himself would have consented to that. In treaties with other States in which German interests were involved, Russia would always loyally consult us beforehand.[2] It was certainly little in keeping with these assurances that Germany's efforts to reach an understanding on the question of the Bagdad railway always met with evasive replies, and a draft plan sent from Berlin was left for months together without an acknowledgment.

These statements found little acceptance in Germany. Among the instructions to our Ambassador in St. Petersburg the remark occurs that we can understand Russia clearing up her various disputed points with England, "But we do not understand it and do not find it justified by necessity, when Russia joins the coalition of the aforesaid three States, which, however ostentatiously they advertise its purely defensive aims, yet in the nature of the thing is directly aimed at us and must threaten our position as a world Power. Your Excellency will leave M. Iswolski in no doubt of the fact that in our opinion Russia's adherence to such a coalition is incompatible with her previous relations to us, and would rather rank her among the number of our enemies." [1]

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[1] Metternich, January 31st, 1907 (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 470).

[2] Miquel, May 17th, 1907, with comments by the Kaiser. Schön, June 19th and July 25th.

Immediately before the conclusion of the treaty with England, the Czar visited the Kaiser at Swinemunde on August 7th, accompanied by Iswolski. Both Sovereigns again renewed their previous assurances. The Kaiser even said that they must pursue a policy in common on the lines of the Björkö Treaty and attract France without undue haste.[2] Shortly afterwards the Kaiser and King Edward met at Wilhelmshöhe and exchanged sentiments of the most peaceful and tranquillising nature.[3]

Probably the truth is that the Entente at the time of its formation—and that is what matters here—was neither so dangerous as the anxious-minded among us believed, nor so innocent as the other side represented. It was still a very loose and fragile structure. It was highly doubtful if Russia and Japan would settle down quickly to peaceful and permanent co-operation, and whether Tibet and Persia would not provide causes of dispute in spite of treaties. England had little sympathy with the absolutist tendencies of Russia, and in St. Petersburg they distrusted England's intentions in the Near East. No definite arrangements had been made for mutual support in the event of war, although it was assumed that any disturbance of the conditions agreed upon must be opposed in concert. It would have been difficult at this time to accept definite plans for territorial acquisitions either in writing or by word of mouth, at the expense of other Powers. If Germany avoided encroachment upon the territories expressly defined, there was no necessity for the Entente to launch out into activities hostile to Germany.

On the other hand the Anglo-French Entente from the first had a latent power of offensive action against Germany which came out clearly in the Morocco crisis. After being, as she thought, rejected by Germany, England had prosecuted her approach to France with the conscious intention of putting an end to Germany's position of arbiter between the two groups of hostile Powers. This lesser Entente of the Western Powers had influenced the general situation very adversely for Germany and had driven the Kaiser to his unlucky attempt to form a German-Russian alliance. So long as Russia formed a counterpoise to the Western Powers, Germany's position was tolerably favourable; but as soon as Russia approached them, as soon as she ceased to regard England as her natural enemy, there were no longer three groups in Europe but only two, the Entente and the Triple Alliance; and everything considered, the former was the stronger from a financial and military point of view, provided Russia regained her strength. Germany had been manœuvred out of her central position and into that of head of the weaker of the two great parties. In Berlin they felt this deeply and were anxious about the future. For the old causes of strife, Alsace-Lorraine, the Balkans and Morocco, were matters affecting primarily Germany and France, and Austria and Russia. It might easily happen that in solving these problems the Entente Powers might range themselves on one side and the Triple Alliance on the other. Then if our opponents would not move, it would mean—yield or fight.

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[1] Instructions to Schön, June 2nd.

[2] Note of August 7th. Schön, August 10th.

[3] Bülow's notes, August 15th and 20th.

There was another aspect equally disturbing. The partitioning of the world went on apace. Africa had already been allotted. In Persia we were practically excluded by the Anglo-Russian Agreement, just as had happened three years previously in Morocco. Eastern Asia, in so far as it was not under Japanese or European supremacy, was neutralised, and so long as America's influence remained powerful, was likely to continue so. The South Sea Islands were disposed of, and protected by the United States against foreign interference. But the fate of European and Asiatic Turkey lay in the uncertain future, and the conviction was constantly gaining ground that its present condition could not be maintained much longer. If the Entente Powers agreed among themselves as to the partitioning of this territory, they might dispose of it without any consideration for the interests of Germany and her allies. Should we calmly allow that to happen? If not, it meant that war threatened once more.

That it would actually come to this was not certain, for hitherto England, France and Russia had failed to reach a solution of Eastern questions. Still the danger existed and was keenly felt by the responsible leaders in Germany and Austria. So far there appeared to be only two ways of effecting a change—by using every opportunity of undermining the Entente, and by strengthening our own alliances. From this point of view the renewal of the Triple Alliance, which expired on April 8th, 1907, was of special significance. Italy was constantly inclining more clearly towards the Western Powers. Our Ambassador in Rome, Count Monts, declared that the Italian alliance was already worthless and advised us not to renew it and to continue only the Austrian alliance. The Kaiser also occasionally expressed similar sentiments; but the idea was given up. Baron Aehrenthal, the new leader of Austrian policy, advocated giving the Italians another six years to complete their armaments, although they were intended for use against Austria, because to release them immediately from the Alliance would simply drive them into joining the Entente and perhaps even into war. It was better to let the Alliance run its course quietly than by anticipating events to give rise to a new cause of unrest.[1] In Eastern policy he hoped to be able to win over France, as owing to her heavy financial liabilities she did not desire a collapse in Turkey. So the time for announcing the termination was allowed to pass and the Triple Alliance, by the terms of 1901, continued unchanged for another six years. But they were under no illusions about it either in Berlin or Vienna. They knew definitely that Italy would not fight against England, nor probably against France, if the clash of arms rang out.

All the time we were looking about for other allies, but they were not to be found. Japan was on close terms with the Entente. The renewal of the old league of the Three Emperors with Russia was unthinkable under the new conditions, although Aehrenthal still toyed with this idea. The Kaiser occasionally spoke of "an insurance treaty with Theodore Roosevelt."[1] But there never was any serious intention of an alliance with the United States for co-operation in Far Eastern or African disputes. All that we could do, as Count Monts recommended, was to maintain a friendly attitude towards America and as far as possible to keep in touch with Russia.[2] Success was uncertain; for Germany and Austria stood isolated amid Powers who were hostile or who had little liking for us.

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[1] Tschirschky's account of a conversation with Aehrenthal, May 7th, 1907 (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 393).

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[1] The Kaiser to Bülow, January 17th, 1907 (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 465).

[2] Count Monts, July 26th, 1907.

## XI. DREADNOUGHTS AND NAVAL COMPETITION

Whether the Entente would establish itself more firmly and acquire a political aspect menacing to Germany and the peace of the world depended, in the first place, on the further development of Anglo-German relations. It could not be lightly assumed that England would lend her support to the French for the reconquest of Alsace-Lorraine, or to the Russians for the mastery of the Straits and the Balkan Peninsula. In England both Parliament and people were always in favour of the maintenance of peace so long as it was possible without injury to themselves ; for peace was a fundamental necessity for commercial prosperity. If German policy could be directed so that it did not conflict with English interests, there was the likelihood that the British Government would exercise a restraining influence on the Powers associated with it, should any conflict arise.

Just then there was no appearance of any cause of vital disagreement between Germany and England. In the summer of 1906 King Edward was justified in remarking to the Kaiser that there was no dispute about isolated matters between the two countries, only a general rivalry.[1] Wherever our colonial territories adjoined, the frontiers were clearly defined. Germany's wishes for the possession of Zanzibar, Walfish Bay, the Volta triangle in Togo, which had been mooted from time to time, were not in themselves of sufficient importance to justify a hostile attitude in our national policy. The one outstanding cause of difference was the continuation of the Bagdad railway down to the Persian Gulf, which England did not desire. The German colony of South West Africa was certainly disliked by the newly formed South African State, as were Germany's possessions in the South Seas by the Australians. The existence of German East Africa interrupted the continuity of an all-British route from the Cape to Cairo and prevented complete control by Britain of the countries bordering the Indian Ocean. These facts caused British Imperialists to regard Germany's colonial empire as an obstacle in Britain's path. But the need for those territories was not so great nor were the advocates of these ideas sufficiently confident of public approval in their own country, to risk a serious breach with Germany that might have entailed war. Certainly commercial rivalry between the two great Germanic nations had immensely increased during the last decade. German industry competed successfully with British all over the world and had captured many of Britain's old markets. The German turnover increased comparatively faster than the English ; German shipping vied with English for the first place in the carrying trade of the world ; and the harbour of Hamburg gradually overshadowed the great harbours of the island empire. The uneasiness roused by German competition was certainly an important factor in popular opinion across the Channel, for they recognised that they were dealing here, not with some passing phenomenon, but with the product of deep-seated causes. The German worked harder and cheaper than the Englishman. He prosecuted his tasks with persistent energy, with methodical reflection, and with the fullest application of the products of German technical and scientific research. England, with her wealth and her higher standard of living, accustomed to ample leisure for sport and recreation, was beginning to take things easy, and felt herself threatened in the calm possession and enjoyment of the position which she had won for herself in previous days under exceptionally favourable circumstances, by this neighbouring nation with its skilled labour and restless activity, competing with her all over the world. It is scarcely to be wondered at that from time to time there were voices calling for the overthrow and despoiling of this inconvenient rival, while the English navy still had enough superiority for the task.

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[1] *Vide* Tschirschky's note, August 15th, 1906. The King said, "There are no frictions between us, there exists only rivalry" (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 453).

But it would be a gross error to regard such utterances as representing the view of the majority of English people or even of their political leaders. Alongside of the growth of German competition was the fact that the industrial life of both nations was constantly becoming more closely interwoven. Germany was England's best customer and purveyor. Germans and English often worked into each other's hands ; and both sides respected the other's capacities and services. In England the feeling that there should be absolutely free competition and "fair play" was far too deeply rooted in the national character for the robber-like cravings of certain circles to carry much weight. All the news which reached Berlin from the great financial and business circles in the "city" agreed that the influential classes did not want war with Germany, because its results would be so incalculable that it was impossible to reckon on any actual advantage. Even the simplest and most natural defensive measure against German competition, the introduction of a tariff, had already met with invincible opposition, because it ran counter to the well-tried principle of Free Trade and threatened to increase the cost of living for the working classes. On the whole they had accustomed themselves in England to realise and put up with the existence of this inconvenient competitor.

From the fact that England, when the War actually broke out, took up the industrial war also with the greatest zeal and by the terms of the peace sought to cripple Germany economically for a long time, it must not be concluded that this had been the real reason and the true aim of the war. That would be as far from the truth as the opposite conclusion that because in Germany during the war many voices demanded an increase of territory or at least a political control of neighbouring lands, the wish for conquest had been the impelling motive on Germany's part. Once war actually comes about each of the combatants naturally tries to secure all the advantages possible in the event of victory, although it would never have thought of plunging into war for the sake of such advantages.

We have already seen the real reasons for the change of English policy towards Germany since 1902. It was thought that the balance of power in Europe was threatened by Germany's military preponderance, all the more so as the Kaiser's desultory policy inspired no confidence and was regarded as the one decisive factor. It was felt to be undesirable that, owing to the continuance of sharp disputes on colonial matters between

England on the one hand and France and Russia on the other, Germany should hold between the two groups a position of arbiter, such as England herself had long held and wished to regain. After the attempt at an alliance with Germany had failed, an endeavour was made to escape from this position by coming to an understanding with France, which was accomplished in 1904. Close relations were established also with Japan; and even with Russia, in spite of many difficulties, an agreement was reached after her defeats in the Far East. Thus Germany was thrust out of the central position so inconvenient for England.

But England had not regained her old dominating position; she was and remained a member of a party. The likelihood was that the position of arbiter in the world's affairs would fall to the only Power that stood outside the conflicting claims of the Quadruple and the Triple Alliances—the United States of America.

The situation was therefore not altogether satisfactory for England. Had she been able, after settling her disputes with France and Russia, to revert to a neutral attitude towards them, and also to a friendly and unfettered position towards Germany and her Allies, she might have regained her old position as arbiter of Europe. This, I think, was the real intention of England's leading men. But in this they were prevented by Germany's Morocco policy, which compelled England to intervene on behalf of France in the single instance in which her assistance became obligatory. Further, the Björkö Treaty by which Germany sought to band the five European Powers against England was regarded as a hostile act.

England's close union with the Dual Alliance looks, therefore, as if it were the outcome of a certain political situation which it was not to England's interest to maintain permanently. Her policy was to clear away all external hindrances and return as soon as possible to her old central position, once the hindrance —*i.e.* the conviction that Germany was pursuing an anti-English policy—ceased to exist. To a certain extent it depended on Germany's attitude whether the Entente should be merely a temporary apparition or should become a permanent combination of forces. But now another factor made itself felt. Once England began to draw closer to the Dual Alliance, the possibility of an armed conflict with Germany required more serious consideration. Hitherto there had been no subject of dispute calling for armed intervention. Certainly in 1896 Germany's foolish Boer policy had called forth a momentary flicker of danger, but England had not taken it too seriously, and Germany's attitude during the Boer War had put matters right. But when a complete settlement had been arranged with France, and Russia knew herself checkmated by Japan, Germany was the only Power remaining with whom England could have any armed dispute. Hence the question arose, was England equipped for such an event should it occur?

The English Government decided that she was not. The larger part of the English fleet was concentrated in the Far East against Russia and France, and in the Mediterranean against France. The Channel Squadron was weak, and in the North Sea there were only a few vessels with no adequately protected base. During these last years the German fleet had grown strong, the Kiel Canal had been completed, and Heligoland had been powerfully fortified. In order to be ready for all eventualities, it seemed necessary to strengthen the fighting forces in the North Sea.

The redistribution and increase of the English navy from 1903 to 1906 served this end. The larger half of the vessels in the Mediterranean and later on in the Far East was withdrawn, being no longer needed against an allied France and a helpless Russia. The Channel Squadron was heavily reinforced and a new Home Fleet stationed in the North Sea. The harbour of Rosyth in Scotland was developed into a permanent base for the fleet. Early in 1905 Balfour declared that England had trebled her fighting force available for the first twenty-four hours of the conflict.

The disposition of the English fighting forces in this way fronted towards Germany. There was no doubt about it. Whether these measures were for defensive purposes or were preparatory to an attack has been hotly disputed. In any case it was clear that England considered Germany now not merely as a possible but as a probable foe.

At the same time keener scrutiny was made in England of the nature and strength of the enemy forces. In the early days the construction of the German navy had been regarded as a harmless hobby of the Kaiser's. Even the naval laws of 1900 had roused no anxiety. It would be a long time before the standard provided for by them would be attained. It was not impossible that technical and financial difficulties might prevent the complete execution of their naval programme. In those days Germany still ranked as a potential political friend; indeed, even as a possible ally, in spite of her infatuation about the Boers. During the negotiations for an alliance in 1901 there was no indication on the English side of any feeling against the German fleet, nor any wish to see it restricted in size.

After 1902 England began to see things differently. While King Edward was at Kiel in 1904, the Kaiser very unwisely held a review of the entire German fleet so far as it was then ready. He only wished to make a display, but the result was that King Edward took back with him the impression that this fleet was much more dangerous than had hitherto been believed. We have already seen how gradually the catchword of the "German Peril" crept into circulation. Now, however, a strong movement was started for the increase of the English fleet. In order to influence public opinion and Parliament, much was made of the possibility of a surprise attack by the German fleet on the English coast, although nobody seriously believed in it. Things had not yet taken a decisive turn. As in industrial life generally, so too in the navy, development was greatly influenced by technical progress. New types of ships with stronger armaments and greater speed were constantly being constructed and the earlier ships grew all the more rapidly out of date. On February 10th, 1906, the *Dreadnought* was launched in England, the first of a new type which left all previous achievements in guns and fighting power far behind. The intention was to build a number of such ships and so secure the supremacy of the British navy. Strange, that it was not foreseen that other Powers would immediately follow this example. If this happened, so many of these new ships would be needed by England that her undisputed superiority in big battleships could not be maintained, or at least only at immense cost. Two consoling arguments were drawn from the situation of Germany: the sums allowed by the naval laws of 1900 for the succeeding years were not sufficient for Dreadnoughts, the cost of which was vastly greater than that of the ships estimated for; and the shallowness of the Kiel Canal would not permit of the passage of these gigantic vessels, so that the whole invaluable advantage of the adaptability of the entire fleet for both the North Sea and the Baltic would be lost.

Just as the new type of battleship made its appearance, the Liberals, who had always opposed any increase of the navy, came into power; and in July, 1906, Campbell-Bannerman ordered a considerable reduction in the programme of construction for the following year, in the expectation that the other Powers would follow this example. In spite of violent opposition from the Conservatives, this slackened pace was maintained in 1907. The old Liberal traditions and the hope that at the second Peace Conference at the Hague a general disarmament would be agreed upon, doubtless accounted for this attitude. Also, it must not be overlooked that an all-round restriction in naval construction would, just at this crisis, have been of great practical advantage to England. Her superiority in old ships held good, and the more slowly the building of battleships of the new Dreadnought type proceeded, the longer and the more securely would England reap the benefit of the two years when she alone had built them.

In Germany they considered whether under the new circumstances they should adhere to the old naval laws of 1900. Although the English fears lest Germany would or could attack England with her fleet were held to be absolutely foolish, there is no denying the fact that the German fleet from the outset was a fighting machine, even though only for defensive measures against England. On each occasion when we had had to evade the possibility of a conflict with England from lack of naval auxiliaries—in the Jameson Raid of 1895, the Samoa question in 1899, the tension during the Boer War, and during the war in the Far East—the conviction had grown on the Kaiser and the leaders of our navy that our fleet must be increased sufficiently to secure that it could no longer be treated by England as a *quantité négligeable*. Since the Morocco crisis in 1905 the possibility of a naval war with England, little as we desired it, seemed to come closer every moment. We felt bound to be armed to meet it.

In May, 1906, the Reichstag accepted a supplementary law introduced by Admiral von Tirpitz whereby the plans for naval construction until 1917 were augmented over and above the six large cruisers laid down in 1900, by provision for an increase in size and armaments in all the new classes of battleships. It would have been foolish to incur a vast expenditure on ships not of the very best technique. This meant that Germany also must build Dreadnoughts, and the necessary money was voted for them. Also, provision was made for enlarging the Kiel Canal. By a law proposed in November, 1907, and passed in 1908, the life of a battleship was reduced from twenty-five to twenty years, which signified not indeed an immediate increase of credits but increased activity in construction for the next years, as a number of ships would now be withdrawn sooner than was originally contemplated. The carrying out of these laws required an energetic agitation in order to convince public opinion and secure a parliamentary majority. England naturally was indicated as the possible enemy, and the whole problem of Germany's naval armaments was for a long time the main theme of public discussion. In the autumn of 1904 Count Bernstorff had given the practical advice "to guard our fleet like a hidden but indispensable treasure and to let the English see and hear as little about it as possible."[1] But such a course was now impossible in view of the inevitable magnitude of the demands. Every agitation exaggerates in order to gain its ends. The attention of the people of England was constantly drawn to the great increase in our fleet by these public discussions. They saw themselves now confronted by the question whether they could venture to adhere to the moderate rate of construction agreed upon previously without incurring dangerous risks to their supremacy at sea.

The English Admiralty took the view that since the construction of Dreadnoughts, the older types of battleships had declined so greatly in value that the strength of a battle fleet could only be measured by the number of its Dreadnoughts. How far that is actually the case is a matter for naval experts. At any rate it was the opinion then held in authoritative quarters in England. Hence arose the following situation. If Germany, as anticipated, between 1908 and 1910 built four great ships-of-the-line yearly—thereafter the rate was to fall to two ships between 1911 and 1917—while England laid down only two such ships each year (or in case the Hague Tribunal did not impose any restriction of armaments, three), in addition to those already in hand in 1908, and continued to build at the same rate, after three years a situation would be reached in the numbers of Dreadnoughts in which England would have practically lost her advantage. She certainly would still retain her old and powerful superiority in the earlier types of vessels, small cruisers, torpedo boats, etc., but, as we have seen, the Admiralty did not consider this decisive, but only the proportion of modern battleships.

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[1] Bernstorff, September 6th, 1904.

It was, then, with pained surprise that England recognised that with the introduction of the Dreadnought type her old unchallenged superiority had ceased, and now she must face with a comparatively small lead competition in the building of large ships by all the other nations. In this state of affairs she was less anxious about the fleets of the friendly disposed French and Japanese or of the distant Americans, than about the German fleet, stationed in immediate proximity to her shores; all the more so as she regarded Germany, as we know, as the only country with whom a warlike conflict within measurable time was probable. As the maintenance of English superiority at sea over any possible enemy was regarded by all parties as an axiom, there were only two solutions for the English: either Germany must reduce her programme, or England must increase hers so greatly that the desired superiority in Dreadnoughts would be secured in future. The Liberal Government would have preferred the former solution; it would not then have needed to break with its old tradition and to come before Parliament with heavy demands for new taxes. But it knew well that it must choose the second alternative because the first was not attainable, and because the Conservatives were watching for a sign of lukewarmness on this question in order to start a damaging agitation against it. These considerations explain the growing urgency of the English Government's attempts to induce the Kaiser to bring about a reduction in the German naval programme.

At the meeting between the Kaiser and King Edward in August, 1906, the question had been briefly touched upon.

But the Kaiser declared decisively that Germany must adhere to her officially sanctioned plans, not for aggressive purposes, but in order to be able to defend her interests in case of necessity. He unwisely added that he considered it doubtful if England could permanently keep up the Two Power Standard. Somewhat later Admiral von Tirpitz sought to convince the English naval attaché of Germany's peaceful intentions by pointing out that at the time of the 1906 naval laws he had not asked for twice as many ships.[1] It is scarcely likely that he made much impression by that statement. The discussion proposed by England between Tirpitz and the head of the English Admiralty, Sir John Fisher, the most zealous advocate of a preventive war against Germany, fell through for reasons unknown, although the Imperial Chancellor was in favour of the idea.[2]

The English took no further direct steps because, as already mentioned, they were waiting for the second Peace Conference at the Hague. This Conference had been proposed by the Czar in the spring of 1906; then, out of consideration for the Pan-American Congress, already summoned, it was postponed till the summer of 1907. The Russian programme aimed specially at an improvement of the arbitration court and a more exact definition of martial law on land and water. England and America, however, insisted on bringing up the question of a general disarmament as one of the subjects for deliberation. The Kaiser was all along determined to send delegates only if the question of disarmament was omitted.[3] He said so to King Edward, who understood his motive. Haldane, the Minister of War, declared that nothing practical would come of it and that he would endeavour to prevent the opposition between England and Germany from becoming outwardly more acute. There was even a suggestion for an agreement on technical questions concerning the conduct of naval warfare before the meeting of the Conference.[4] In February, 1907, Germany officially declined to sanction the introduction of the question of disarmament and of an obligatory court of justice in the programme of the Conference. Grey was disappointed. He said to Metternich that for England this point was the most important item in the whole Conference. Public opinion demanded a reduction of the expenditure on armaments; if unity was wrecked by Germany's resistance he must lay the reasons frankly before Parliament. Berlin regarded this as an attempt at imposing restrictions on the German navy and sought to convince President Roosevelt that this proposal was directed solely against Germany.[1] The Czar also was sceptical as to results. Iswolski, however, thought it was worth considering whether it might not be better to let the English submit their proposal to the Conference and then arrange to give it "a first-class funeral." Italy and France shared this opinion. Count Metternich also counselled this course, so that we alone might not be "saddled with the odium of maintaining the burdens of war for all nations by bluntly declining discussion without alleging sufficient reasons."[2] Bülow heartily agreed with this point of view, but yielded nevertheless to the influence of Privy Councillor Kriege, the leader of the legal department of the Foreign Office, who had acquired for himself an authoritative position. We therefore decided to decline to take part in discussions on these topics. The German and Austrian Ambassadors in St. Petersburg requested personal interviews with the Czar and laid before him the wishes of their Sovereigns that he should decline any extension of the programme.[3] Iswolski considered this proceeding a personal affront. According to von Schön, this vain man had hoped to reap a popular success for himself, and he was almost in tears when Germany and Austria destroyed his prospects by their action: Schön felt that Iswolski would show himself less amenable to our wishes in future. The Czar also considered a plain refusal unsuitable. Finally England formulated her motion so that she reserved to herself the right of bringing up the question of the limitation of armaments. Germany and Austria replied that they considered the discussion of this question would yield no practical results, and that therefore they would not take part in the deliberations concerning it. Russia, at the Czar's behest, joined somewhat more guardedly in this refusal.[1]

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[1] Tirpitz's note, January 9th, 1907.

[2] Bülow to Tirpitz, January 16th, 1907.

[3] Kaiser's comment on a newspaper article, August 6th, 1906.

[4] Tschirschky to Metternich, September 4th, 1906 (*Grosse Politik*, xxi. 459).

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[1] German circular letter of February 4th, 1907. Metternich, February 8th. Despatch to Sternburg, February 9th.

[2] Schön, January 28th, February 11th. Despatch to Schön, February 9th. Metternich, February 17th, with Bülow's remark, "very true." Monts, March 3rd.

[3] Schön, February 18th, March 12th, 15th and 16th. Berchtold was received by the Czar on 15th March, Schön on the 16th.

The British Ambassador at the Hague did bring up the subject for discussion. But the Conference passed it over almost without a debate, and proceeded to the order of the day, as there was no prospect of a practical solution of the question.

While Germany appeared in this matter in company with Russia and Austria at least, on the question of the obligatory Court of Arbitration our representatives were unable to avoid isolation. By the addition of the so-called "Honour Clauses," by means of which each State could decline treatment by arbitration if, in its opinion, its vital interests, its independence or its honour were at stake, and by the limitation of the obligatory proceedings on legal disputes, especially concerning the interpretation of existing treaties, the proposals were so watered down that their acceptance involved no serious danger. In spite of this, the German representatives, supported only by Austria and a few smaller States, voted against it and so destroyed a unanimous international verdict. Herr von Marschall, the leader of the German delegation and an ex-lawyer, had evidently let himself be captivated by Kriege's legal arguments. In Berlin there was not sufficient interest taken in these things nor a sufficiently wide outlook to recognise that by our attitude we were taking upon ourselves the odium of driving back a work of peace for which the whole world was longing. England, too, had not been free from doubts. But these seem to have been allayed by the Portuguese Ambassador, the Marquis de Soveral, an intimate friend of King Edward. England might not have persevered had it not been known in London that Germany was resolved to wreck the project; it was then convenient to shift the odium on to Germany.[2] The two leading members of the Triple Alliance appeared thus isolated in the public opinion of the world and offered their enemies abundant scope for cavil. That the acceptance of the proposed formulae would have prevented subsequent wars only a novice in politics could believe. But Germany's consent would have prevented much suspicion of our peaceful intentions and would have saved us afterwards from a campaign of slander.

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[1] Schön, March 23rd, April 3rd and 10th. German Memorial, March 24th.

[2] Cf. Zorn, *Germany and the two Hague Conferences*, p. 53.

After the failure of the English attempt to reduce the German armaments by means of the Hague Conference, the only way left was by direct negotiations with Germany. But England still hesitated about that. No official mention was made of the naval question either during King Edward's visit to Wilhelmshöhe in August, or during the Kaiser's long visit to England, from November 9th to December 12th, 1907. But in a discussion of the general situation every endeavour was made to improve our mutual relations. German statesmen declared that they had no intention of seriously obstructing France's proceedings in Morocco; English leaders disavowed any hostile intentions towards Germany. The possibility of an agreement on the Bagdad railway was exhaustively discussed. On the German side it was proposed that English capital should participate in the whole undertaking and that the construction of the last part, down to the Persian Gulf, should be carried through jointly by Germany and England. Grey considered this a sound basis, but wished to include Russia and France in further negotiations. As the Germans would not agree to this, because they were afraid of being always outvoted by the three Entente Powers, these conversations led to no practical result.[1]

It was the programme of construction till the year 1917, attached to the German naval proposals of November, 1907, which seems to have brought home to the English Ministers the full seriousness of the situation. When the English Radicals demanded a reduction in the naval estimates in the spring of 1908, the Conservatives raised the cry that an increase of the navy was a necessity in view of Germany's growing armaments. During his last visit to England, the Kaiser had sought in conversation with English naval experts to produce a tranquillising effect, and he now thought fit in a private letter (sent without the Imperial Chancellor's knowledge) to Lord Tweedmouth, the First Lord of the Admiralty, to emphasise again the fact that

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[1] Notes on Wilhelmshöhe, August 15th and 20th, 1907. Schön, November 16th (on Windsor). German circular letter, November 20th. Bülow to Schön, November 21st.

Germany was not thinking of challenging Britain's supremacy at sea. The new naval laws, he said, did not increase the number of ships, but merely replaced old material that had become obsolete by new technical equipment. Just as England had the right to build as many ships as she judged necessary to protect her commerce and naval supremacy, Germany must also be allowed the same right. If England built 100 new ships, Germany would not on that account build one more than her own needs required. On the other hand, it was always said in England that if Germany built more, England must do so too. In that way the bulk of the population came to regard Germany as an enemy; it awakened a corresponding echo in Germany and public opinion became poisoned. The Kaiser defended himself from the assumption that he was seeking Sir John Fisher's overthrow, and declared it was almost ludicrous that England, with her five-fold naval superiority, should affect to fear the German fleet. He himself admired the magnificent English fleet and wished always to see its flag on the same side as Germany's. In speaking of the dangers of constant agitation, Sir John Fisher had made a shrewd comment, "If Eve had not been constantly looking at the apple she wouldn't have eaten it, and we shouldn't have needed to bother about clothes!"[1]

This way of regarding the matter was certainly very naïve. For we also thought we needed just so many ships as prevented England from having too great a numerical superiority; and for England the maintenance of her naval supremacy, which the Kaiser regarded as a justifiable aim, required that the number of her ships must be increased if Germany added to hers. The argument that every country should build as many ships as it needs for its requirements, without heeding what others do, betrays, it must be admitted, if honestly meant, an almost incredible confusion of thought for such a vital matter. The armaments of a great Power, on sea as well as on land, depend inevitably upon the output in armaments of all the other Powers; for one's own need compels one to be strong enough to ward off any probable assault.

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[1] The Kaiser to Lord Tweedmouth, February 16th, 1908. The latter's reply, February 22nd, now published in Tirpitz's *Politische Dokumente*, 58 and 63.

Lord Tweedmouth sent a courteous reply without going into details and enclosed for the Kaiser's perusal the English naval estimates for 1908-1909, which were to be submitted to Parliament in the following week.

Vague rumours of this exchange of letters reached the public ear. The Kaiser was suspected of attempting indirectly to induce Lord Tweedmouth to effect reductions in the English naval budget. The matter came up in Parliament. The English Ministers defended their colleague, who had shown them the letter, and they declared that an absolutely private interchange of letters, as in the present instance, could not be communicated to Parliament. In Germany there was no objection to the publication of the letter, but in England they were afraid that a storm of indignation would break forth when it was learned that Lord Tweedmouth had informed the Kaiser of the naval budget before it had been submitted to Parliament. It was a very imprudent thing to do. King Edward, to whom the Kaiser had at once sent a copy of the letter, could not get over his astonishment at the unusual step of a Sovereign writing to a Foreign Minister, and added that the Kaiser's explanation did not alter the fact that Germany was constantly augmenting her fleet and that England had therefore to increase hers to a corresponding extent.[1] The Kaiser's letter was one of those actions in which he so frequently indulged, well meant but tactless, with surprisingly untoward results. On March 2nd, in the House of Commons, Asquith declared that England stood or fell with her naval supremacy, which must be defended against every possible combination of Powers. On the other hand, on May 26th Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, declared that England was not altogether guiltless in this matter of the armaments race ; and that the measures she had taken had roused fears of attack in Germany. M'Kenna, Lord Tweedmouth's successor as First Lord of the Admiralty, affirmed on July 13th that England's present naval equipment was sufficient. By the end of 1911 they would have twelve Dreadnoughts to Germany's nine, which allowed England a safe margin. On the other hand, Field-Marshal Lord Roberts declared a German invasion possible.

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[1] Metternich, March 3rd, 6th, 7th. Bülow to the Kaiser, March 6th. Schön to Bülow, March 7th.

Count Metternich never wearied of pointing out that England feared the German fleet because of its efficiency, and that the loss of a battle in the North Sea would mean the end of England's naval supremacy. He declared that we were already too strong for an alliance with the English, as they were afraid of becoming dependent on us. The Kaiser maintained it was possible to argue the English out of this folly. They had brought themselves into their present uncomfortable plight through their Dreadnought policy and now it had got on their nerves. "They must just accustom themselves to our navy. And from time to time we must assure them it is not against them."

In June, 1908, Herr Ballin, a director of the Hamburg-America Line, had an interview with Sir Ernest Cassel, a leading financier and an intimate friend of King Edward. Cassel said that the King was deeply convinced that the rapid development of the German navy threatened England's position at sea. He quite believed in the Kaiser's peaceful intentions, but one must look ahead into the future. Cassel added further that among English naval experts it was perfectly well known that the increase in the German fleet was in reality much greater than appeared in the official returns. Fear of the German peril was the impelling motive of the whole Entente policy of King Edward. He indicated finally that England and her allies might possibly put the question to Germany as to when she intended to call a halt in increasing her armaments. Ballin thereupon replied that he would be rendering the cause of peace a great service if he left no doubt that such a question would involve war. Germany would resist such an attempt at a Fashoda with all her power.[1] Ballin was doubtless acting on information, knowing that this was the view held by the Kaiser and the Imperial Chancellor. Also in a signed circular letter from Bülow, of June 25th, the principle was laid down,

> "Agreements bearing upon the limitation of our fighting strength are not under any circumstances to be discussed by us. A Power which demands such an agreement must clearly understand that such a demand means war with us."

Although this had only been a conversation between private individuals, shortly afterwards Lord Hardinge sought an interview with the German Ambassador for the purpose of speaking about the suspicion roused by the building of the German fleet. When Metternich replied that England could always build more ships, Hardinge declared that they had no guarantee that the German programme would not be suddenly increased as in the previous year. Germany certainly had the right to build as much as she liked, but the German shores were not far away and England's existence depended on her supremacy at sea, and this must be maintained whatever the cost. If it became very onerous owing to the immense burdens necessary, Germany would be blamed for having caused this increase. The navy league in Germany kept up an agitation with the cry that England meant to attack Germany, merely as a pretext for increasing the navy. When Metternich reminded him that England by the introduction of Dreadnoughts had completely altered the whole question and made the new efforts inevitable, Hardinge sighed and did not dispute it. Sir John Fisher's remark about a preventive war he declared wild talk. During this interview Hardinge did not bring forward any definite proposals.

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[1] Hammann's note on Ballin's communications, June 22nd. Cf. also Huldermann, *Albert Ballin*, p. 204.

From the Kaiser's comments on Metternich's report of this conversation it is evident that he himself believed in the possibility of an English surprise attack on the German coast, not perhaps immediately but within a number of years. The means he recommended for avoiding this conflict were highly peculiar. He wrote, " the simplest solution is an Entente or alliance with us ; then all anxiety would be at an end. Our relations with Austria show that we are good allies." He seemed to have forgotten entirely that England had repeatedly offered us such an alliance before she turned to France and Russia. Now that she had made new ties for herself and that feeling on both sides had become so inflamed, an alliance could no longer be seriously thought of.[1]

Metternich found that Balfour, one of the leading members of the opposition, also entertained the conviction that Germany was aiming at a decisive fight with England. On the other hand, he declared that England would not let herself be led into war with Germany except under the strongest provocation. Unless we compelled England to fight there would be no war. There was great fear of Germany, but no thought of attacking her; and this fear was based not so much upon our population, or upon our commercial rivalry, or even upon anxiety for the balance of power, as upon our fleet. This report too was commented upon by the Kaiser. He declared it was harebrained stupidity if the English imagined that we wanted to attack them from envious rivalry. "We shall never be such fools as that! That would simply be Hara-Kiri—all that we want is for them to leave us in peace to extend our commerce undisturbed." [1]

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[1] Metternich, June 30th, 1908, with marginal comments by the Kaiser.

The two most influential Ministers, Grey and Lloyd George, expressed similar views to our Ambassador. They declared that our relations could never improve so long as both sides kept tightening the screw in this naval competition. A powerful German fleet with a powerful German army behind it was a serious menace for England. When Metternich replied that England must allay the anxiety caused by her Ententes against us before she could talk about any reduction in naval construction, Lloyd George remarked that a slackening of the pace would do more to allay anxiety than any political action. The introduction of Dreadnoughts had been a mistake, and they were prepared to give guarantees against the introduction of new types. For the rest, confidential discussions on the naval budgets of both countries would give better results than an official exchange of notes; no word of it ought to be made public.

The wish for an understanding in this sense was clearly indicated on the English side, and expressed with the utmost courtesy. Metternich added that his impression was that they only refrained from making a formal proposal because, from Ballin's remarks, they had been afraid of the risk of war. They wanted neither to present an ultimatum nor to ask threatening questions, but only to prevent the possibilities of war by means of an understanding. As he did not consider it impossible at any rate to discuss the wishes which had been expressed, he had framed his answers so as to leave all the possibilities open.

Although Metternich, who knew the Kaiser's point of view, had expressed himself very prudently, his report roused the Kaiser's indignation. He considered the language of the English Ministers arrogant. We ought to allow no one to dictate to us what our armaments were to be. There was nothing to be said to an official proposal of that kind. There was undoubtedly a hidden menace at the bottom of it, and it was for England first to ask America, France and Japan to reduce their fleets. She only turned on us because she thought we should be scared by her talk of war. The Ambassador had exceeded his functions when he indicated that we might be prepared under certain circumstances for a restriction of our fighting forces: he had started down an inclined plane. "He must be made to feel that a good understanding with England is not desirable at the cost of the completion of Germany's fleet. If England only intends graciously to offer us her hand on condition that we reduce our fleet, that is an unparalleled impertinence and a bitter insult to the German people and their Kaiser, which the Ambassador must reject *a limine*. France and Russia might with equal reason demand a limitation of our land armaments. The law will be carried out to the last iota. Whether the British like it or not, is immaterial. If they want war, they can begin it. We are not afraid of it."[1]

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[1] Metternich, July 10th, with marginal comments by the Kaiser.

These remarks indicate clearly the atmosphere in which the Kaiser was then moving. He was strengthened in this attitude by the leading naval circles. Certainly this view of the English proposal was very one-sided. It is hard to see what humiliation or insult to Germany there was in a confidential discussion on the limitation of armaments, which would have bound not only us but also the English to definite standards. Later on it actually took place with the Kaiser's participation.

On a later occasion Lloyd George further declared that if the race in armaments continued, the tension would increase and the danger of a conflict would become real. Besides, Germany would make nothing by it, because England would always build more in proportion so that the result would be the same. But the consequence would be that the war party in England would be strengthened and would ultimately press for a large army and the introduction of general compulsory service. He thought they might perhaps make the proportion of two to three the normal standard. But the English fleet must always be so much stronger that it inspired a feeling of safety and prevented any wanton desire to attack from the German side. On the other hand, it was justifiable to make the German navy so strong that it would be risky for England to engage it. Such was his personal opinion, but he thought he would find the Cabinet prepared to discuss the question of a slackening of speed if we were willing. If both sides agreed to build one Dreadnought fewer per year, that would produce a complete change of mood in England; he himself was ready to use his influence in a manner friendly to Germany.

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[1] Metternich, July 16th, with marginal comments by the Kaiser. *Vide* Tirpitz, *Dokumente*, 72 (without the Imperial marginal comments).

The Kaiser accepted this report in the same spirit as the previous ones. He declared that this was a tone which was only employed with insignificant small States. After such language he could only give a triple No to every proposal of this sort. He blamed Metternich severely. "I must request that in future he shall reject unhesitatingly all such effusions."[1] The Imperial Chancellor took up a totally different attitude. He stood midway between Metternich on the one side, who urgently advised an understanding and foresaw serious dangers in future from a continuance of the naval rivalry, and the Kaiser and Tirpitz on the other, who thought they could impress England by the unrelenting prosecution of their naval construction and induce her to recognise Germany's equality of rights, and then possibly come to a working agreement. He was under no misapprehension as to the serious perils of the latter course and as to the illusions which the Emperor and the Admiral harboured; to these we shall refer further. Already in 1904, when the Kaiser thought that in two years we should be through the "danger zone," he had been sceptical and had remarked, not intending it for his master's eye, "moreover this deduction is false, as if our navy would be 'ready' in two years' time. The discrepancy between us and England will be the same in two, four, or six years as it is to-day."[2] At the end of July he had an open dispute on the subject with the Kaiser at Swinemünde. Through Admiral von Müller, the head of the naval cabinet, the Kaiser sent word that he was convinced that the question of a slackening of speed in our naval development was not suited for discussion, and he was determined to part with him if he did not accept this point of view. After a long discussion with the Admiral, Bülow yielded and declared his willingness to send corresponding instructions to Metternich. Not till he had handed in this declaration was he received again by the Emperor. Herr von Müller gives merely a brief notice of the conversation to the effect that both parties were satisfied.[1] Bülow nevertheless passed on the Kaiser's censure to the Ambassador in a much diluted form. He advised him to reply, declining absolutely any request for a reduction of armaments if it were presented in a threatening form. But as a better understanding with England was desirable and a war, ruinous for civilisation, ought certainly to be avoided, it would perhaps be a sound tactical move to point out at a suitable opportunity that it would facilitate matters for us in initiating a slower pace in building, if England would guarantee us her complete neutrality in the event of a war with France. The question of agreements binding on both sides as to naval construction in the future could only be decided when England had for a longer time pursued a more friendly policy towards us. If they, over there, were afraid of new and larger German naval plans it might be possible to reassure them.[2] He considered the policy recommended by the Ambassador as essentially just; but out of consideration for the prevalent mood of the Kaiser and the navy he intended to adopt for the time being a temporising policy, and if England evinced any definite sign of political compliance, to make use of it to influence the Kaiser.

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[1] Metternich, August 1st, with marginal comments by the Kaiser. *Vide* Tirpitz, *Dokumente*, 75 (without marginal comments).

[2] Bülow to the Foreign Office, December 3rd, 1904.

After these exhaustive discussions with Metternich, English statesmen must have had a considerable knowledge of the mental attitude of the leading circles in Germany. What this understanding with Germany meant to them can be gauged from the fact that in spite of everything they decided to use the opportunity of King Edward's visit to the Kaiser at Friedrichshof in August, 1908, to bring up the question of the fleet in conversation between the two Sovereigns. The fact that Hardinge and Lloyd George accompanied the King to Germany shows the importance attached to the impending discussion. Lascelles was told beforehand to sound the Kaiser, who replied that any compromise on naval construction or the rate of building was to be absolutely excluded; no nation could tolerate foreign influences on its armaments.[1] The King therefore refrained from mentioning this matter himself to his nephew. But Hardinge ventured to broach the subject with the Kaiser. He said that the English Admiralty was convinced that Germany, in 1912, would have as many Dreadnoughts as England. The Kaiser declared that was nonsense, and called his attention to the comparative tables in *Nauticus*, in which the great superiority of the English fleet was shown. But Hardinge did not desist. He felt that the competition must stop some day and the pace be slackened, otherwise in England there would have to be a great increase of the fleet in the next year, requiring high taxes, which might turn the present Government out of office. Finally he asked outright if Germany could not restrict her armaments?

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[1] Von Müller to Tirpitz, July 31st, 1908, Tirpitz, *Dokumente*, 85. The date there given, August 31st, is an error. The Kaiser was at that date in Lorraine, but at the end of July he and Bülow were at Swinemünde, which is important, as it shows that the dispute took place before the meeting in Kronberg.

[2] Bülow to Metternich, August 5th, 1908.

The Kaiser replied that our armaments only met our requirements and were purely defensive in character. Hardinge said that if that was so a settlement could still be reached. "You must stop, or build more slowly." The Kaiser replied somewhat brusquely "Then we shall fight, for it is a question of national honour and dignity." Hardinge, conscious that the conversation had taken an ominous turn, reddened and begged the Kaiser to consider his words as having been spoken in confidence without due reflection. They then spoke of other matters, and eventually the Kaiser conferred on Hardinge the Order of the Red Eagle, 1st Class. At parting he remarked, "an alliance with Germany would be best for England also." The Kaiser was very proud of the fact that he had shown his teeth; that was always the way to treat the English.[2]

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[1] The Kaiser to Bülow, August 11th.

[2] The Kaiser to Bülow, August 11th and 12th; *vide* Tirpitz, *Dokumente*, 69, and *Europäische Gesprächen*, 1925, p. 76, where Hardinge's report to the English Foreign Office on his conversations with the Kaiser is published. A

King Edward's visit to the Kaiser had been recorded with friendly interest in the English press because, Metternich surmised, some understanding on naval matters was expected as a result of the personal intercourse.[1] Herr von Stumm, on the other hand, who replaced Metternich during the following weeks, held the view that an agreement which saved England fresh taxes would at most affect only a small section of the Liberal party and would be powerless to bring about good relations permanently.[2]

The Imperial Chancellor was not present at Friedrichshof, but was holiday-making in Norderney. Had he purposely absented himself from these trying interviews? When Hardinge and Lloyd George expressed a wish to visit him at Norderney, he declined, as it might attract too much attention. He did not conceal from the Kaiser that he was not in agreement with his attitude. His master's endeavours to create a powerful fleet had his whole-hearted support, he even looked upon this as the Kaiser's appointed task; in no circumstances would he be driven back by English threats; but there were one or two points that required serious consideration. In the first place, he thought it not impossible that England would go the length of war if the armaments on both sides continued; and he considered that if war came about, the situation would be serious. Probably France too, and through France Russia, would be drawn in. The Turkish army could not be relied on. Revolutions in India and Egypt were unlikely. Also, he did not believe that the English meant to threaten us, but that they were merely putting out feelers to find out if they could by any means obviate this great new construction and the heavy taxation which it entailed; if not, they would certainly lay down a huge naval programme. If all confidential discussion was declined, the ill-feeling would deepen and produce a real danger of war. England's resources for the building of ships were greater

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comparison of the two reports, in my opinion, gives no reason for doubting the above remarks from the Kaiser's letter. Hardinge's official report is more tranquil and diplomatic than the Kaiser's temperamental letter, and does not mention the Kaiser's violent language and his reply to it. In his letter to Bülow the Kaiser has omitted his remarks as to a German-English agreement because it met with no response. Jenisch (envoy with the Kaiser) to the Foreign Office, August 12th and 14th; Metternich, September 14th.

[1] Metternich, August 11th.

[2] Von Stumm, August 20th.

than ours. If the Liberals were turned out of office in England the prospects of an understanding would be greatly lessened. He certainly was not afraid of war, but "your Majesty must also understand that I am doing my utmost so that with God's help your Majesty's life-work may be carried out and completed. Everything depends on how we get through these next years."[1]

But although such were the thoughts that actuated the Imperial Chancellor, the decisive word had been spoken by the Kaiser himself: every official proposal for a limitation of the German fleet was to be regarded as a hostile act. Lloyd George and Hardinge returned home convinced that nothing could be done with Germany.

The British Government came to the conclusion that it must swallow the bitter pill and apply to Parliament in spring for large credits for the navy. This was all the more mortifying for them, as it would completely ruin their policy of retrenchment and incur the reproach of the Conservatives that they had unduly neglected England's defences for two years past and were now seeking to overtake what they had left undone. During the winter Lloyd George worked out his new scheme of heavy taxation, which included burdens hitherto undreamt of on income and property. When it was brought out in the spring of 1909, it gave rise to violent disputes in Parliament, was rejected by the House of Lords, led to the dissolution of Parliament, and gave the impetus to that last great constitutional struggle in England which ended by relegating the Upper House to the rôle of a merely advisory chamber. All these internal difficulties and struggles, the issue of which was uncertain and might cost the Liberal leaders their office and restore the Conservatives to power, confronted the Government. Probably, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lloyd George envisaged the situation with special clearness and on that account went to Germany. It was not only the increase in the naval estimates which caused the burden of taxation to mount up, but, above all, the expenditure on the projected social legislation. The understanding with Germany, however, would certainly have led to a very considerable reduction in the budget.

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[1] Bülow to the Kaiser, August 29th.

There is therefore no ground for the statement that the English at this time were not in earnest in their effort to draw closer to us. They did not attempt it with the idea of pleasing us, but in order to avert serious internal dissensions—a motive that made a stronger appeal to many an English Minister than considerations of foreign policy. As an understanding was a matter of deep importance to them, they might perhaps have agreed to conditions favourable for Germany's naval strength, or even possibly have made political concessions such as Bülow desired. However, every discussion of the question being ruled out in advance, no one knew what they had thought of offering. When Herr von Stumm, who had a less favourable opinion of the English attitude than Metternich, pointed out that just then political concessions might lead to an agreement over the building programme, Bülow, knowing how strongly the Kaiser was influenced by the naval staff in matters concerning the fleet, made an attempt to appeal direct to Tirpitz. The latter assured him that no new increases of the fleet were planned, and that if England would alter her policy towards us, he thought a future agreement was possible as to the construction of ships, provided our officially sanctioned programme was not altered. The Chancellor immediately told this to Count Metternich,[1] who watched his opportunity to make use of the fact that no further increases were intended.[2] The truth is that Bülow had not recognised the crux of the situation, or else he had evaded it in view of the difficulties ahead. For England it was always a question of a slackening of the rate of construction laid down in the naval laws, since only thus could she get any relief from the necessity of great expenditure on an immediate corresponding increase of her fleet. For that she might perhaps have offered us something, but not for the mere promise that we would not in future further increase the pace, which was all that the apparent concession by Tirpitz amounted to.

Just at this juncture the notorious interview with the Kaiser appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*. It originated with a private citizen, Colonel Stuart-Wortley, whose guest the Kaiser had been in 1907, and to whom the Kaiser had spoken in confidence about his attitude to England, with the object of refuting the idea that he was not friendly towards England or had ever pursued a hostile policy towards her. During the Boer War he had rejected the Franco-Russian proposal for intervention and so had left England free at home; he had also, after hearing from his General Staff, sent the best of advice for bringing the war to an end—advice which had probably influenced Lord Roberts and Kitchener in their subsequent plans. The interviewer had, like a loyal friend, asked the Kaiser if he might publish the conversations. The Kaiser dutifully submitted the manuscript to the Foreign Office asking if there were any objections to its publication. It was forwarded to the Imperial Chancellor, who was still at Norderney doing a cure. He unfortunately omitted to read it, and as the minor officials did not venture on any comments or considered them unnecessary, the Kaiser was informed that there were no objections, and so the interview was published (October 27th).

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[1] Bülow to Metternich, September 22nd.

[2] Metternich, November 26th.

In Germany and in England it produced a violent sensation. In England it had exactly the opposite effect to what had been intended. It was held up to ridicule. England, it was said, would have won the Boer War no matter what the Kaiser had done. The Kaiser's advice and his remarks on the actual conduct of the war were looked upon as insulting, as if it were this advice which had given the English generals the hint for their conduct of the war and had facilitated the victory. The whole incident was regarded as a tactless attempt on the part of the Kaiser to enhance his prestige, while at the same time by the increase of his navy he was forcing England to bear huge additional armaments and taxation. In Germany the publication of the interview led to a violent campaign against the personal rule of the Kaiser. Prince Bülow tendered his resignation, which was declined, after the Kaiser had given an assurance that in the future he would take no step of political significance without the Chancellor's advice. Finally, in November, there was a great debate in the Reichstag, in which the Kaiser felt himself so inadequately defended by Bülow that ever afterwards he cherished a strong personal antipathy to him. Later on the Kaiser declared to Schön that he had been betrayed; that Bülow had read the article and had used the publication of it to make the Kaiser submit to his domestic authority. A committee of the

Federal Council even considered the possibility of advising him to abdicate.[1]

Towards the end of the year, thinking that the Kaiser was now unlikely to offer him any opposition, the Imperial Chancellor again seriously considered the question of a naval agreement with England. He first approached Tirpitz, but got small support from him, as the Admiral was of opinion that it was not our fleet but our industrial competition that was the real cause of the political tension. Metternich, on being told this, contradicted it emphatically.

> "I doubt," he writes, "if an impartial observer who had spent only a few months in England could be of any other opinion than that the cardinal feature of our relations with England lies in the growth of our fleet. This may not be pleasant for us to learn; but I see no use in disguising the truth and I do not consider it compatible with my duty to do so." [2]

Thereupon Prince Bülow submitted the following official question to Tirpitz:

> "I permit myself to address to Your Excellency, with whom the technical responsibility rests the moment armed conflict begins, the question whether Germany and the German people can contemplate an armed attack by England with calm and confidence?"

At the same time he told Metternich he would advocate a slackening in the rate of building.[3] Tirpitz waited for 14 days before replying. Then he declared he must answer the question in the negative, but that he felt it his duty to prevent England from an attack by building as strong a battle fleet as possible. Only in this way could peace be maintained. Meanwhile we must traverse a danger zone. It would make no difference if we undertook to reduce our naval construction, which would look like humiliating ourselves before England. That would only make the situation more critical. The more England feared our fleet, the less danger there was of war. Within a few years the attack would be a great risk, and thereby the naval policy of recent years would have reached its goal. From 1912 onwards the navy laws provided for the construction of only two battleships a year. The reduction from four to two would then have a tranquillising effect on public opinion in England.

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[1] Von Schön, *Erlebtes*, p. 94.

[2] Metternich, November 17th. Tirpitz to Bülow, November 22nd and 25th. Metternich, November 26th, and privately to Bülow, November 27th. Tirpitz, *Dokumente*, 86-94.

[3] Bülow to Tirpitz, November 30th; to Metternich, December 11th.

Bülow did not regard this as an adequate reply to his enquiry. He answered that it seemed to him questionable whether later on our fleet might not be in the same position as at present, if England increased her fleet at the same rate, and whether it were not wiser to strengthen our coast defences and our mines and to increase the number of our torpedo boats? He thought that the strengthening of these purely defensive measures would raise less uneasiness in England than the incessant increase of our battle fleet. Finally he suggested that from 1909 to 1911 we should build only three ships instead of four, and in later years we could overtake the consequent reduction of output. The completion of our plans gave us thirteen Dreadnoughts by 1911, but England, unless she carried out large additions, would only have twelve.

Tirpitz nevertheless insisted that any concession would be interpreted as yielding to threats and would be of no use. He deplored the fact that we had already held out the prospect of renouncing a further increase in our navy without stipulating for any compensation. Any alteration in the rate of construction was impossible without an alteration in the naval laws; that he could not ask from the Reichstag, and if it were contemplated, he must beg to tender his resignation. The completion of the means of defence suggested by Bülow had been adequately provided for; without a strong battle fleet they were valueless. The essential thing was to increase the risk for England, and only by augmenting the battle fleet could that be done. Besides, the increase in the number of crews necessary for the smaller craft would also be regarded by England as a threat of war.

Bülow again insisted that he felt it his duty to prevent a clash of arms if there were not the prospect of a victorious issue. But as Tirpitz refused to slacken speed and it was doubtful from Metternich's despatches whether such a concession would be sufficient to exert any appreciable influence on English feeling, he would give up the idea. He finally requested the Admiral's view as to whether an unqualified refusal should be given, if King Edward, during his forthcoming visit to Berlin, again reverted to the matter. Tirpitz thought he would not advise that, as it would put the odium on ourselves. We might possibly offer in ten years' time not to build more than three large ships yearly, in the event of England not building or buying more than four. Besides, in the autumn of 1911 we should only have nine, and in the autumn of 1912, thirteen Dreadnoughts ready.

Bülow agreed with this in principle, but thought it scarcely likely that England would consent to the proportion of three to four. In addition to political concessions, some security should be demanded for England's attitude in the case of warlike developments between Germany and the other Powers. Tirpitz cautioned him against attaching too much weight to political concessions of that kind; mutual military services were more reliable. England would at first reject the formula of three to four, but would end by consenting to it, as a big increase would cost a great deal, and in his opinion she would not be able to carry it through.[1]

During King Edward's visit to Berlin in February, 1909, only a passing mention was made of the navy. Both sides reassured one another that no sinister plans were being cherished, but nothing was said about reducing output. Bülow gathered the impression that, in the meantime, it was best not to open up this thorny question.[2] While these tedious discussions were in progress in Berlin, a decision had already been come to in London. The new naval plans had been drawn up and likewise Lloyd George's great Budget with its immense increase in taxation. To a query if some understanding with Germany could not be reached, Asquith replied on March 16th that Germany would not entertain such proposals, because their Government took up the attitude that their own needs, not the strength of a foreign fleet, must decide the extent of their rate of construction; a very pertinent statement. When Prince Bülow thereupon argued in the Reichstag that England had never brought forward an official proposal of this nature, he was literally correct; but it is easy to understand that this appeared disloyal to the English Minister, seeing that Germany had declined the official consideration of the question by her categorical refusal of the preliminary confidential overtures.

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[1] Tirpitz to Bülow, December 17th, with comments by Bülow; Bülow to Tirpitz, December 25th; Tirpitz to Bülow, January 4th, 1909; Bülow to Tirpitz, January 11th; Tirpitz to Bülow, January 20th; Bülow to Tirpitz, January 29th; Tirpitz to Bülow, February 4th; all in Tirpitz, *Dokumente*, 97-121,

[2] Bülow's notes, February 10th and 11th; for the latter, and for the Kaiser's conversation with King Edward, February 12th, *vide* Tirpitz, 122. Circular letter, February 13th; Bülow to Tirpitz, February 19th, *vide* Tirpitz, 124.

Metternich was successful in his efforts to relieve somewhat the ill-feeling in England. He believed that even now political concessions might be gained, if the period of construction for the ships already sanctioned were extended for another five years. In return for that he thought we might, provided we were the parties attacked, get a promise of neutrality, certainly not more.

> "Last summer was the psychological moment. Then with a little compliance much might have been gained. But not now. At that time the English Government was hesitating and doubtful. Now it is determined to meet us in the Dreadnought competition on the basis of the Two Power Standard."

Nevertheless, there was no fear now of England going to war on that account. He again cautioned his Government against the view prevalent in naval circles, that if England found herself unable to maintain the superiority in naval construction, she would bow to the inevitable and be good friends with us again. Fear would never drive the English into our arms, but into facing us fully armed.[1] In England the suspicion was repeatedly expressed that Germany was actually building at a faster rate than was prescribed by law. Since March, 1909, a great many exaggerated and inaccurate statements had been made in the English press and Parliament as to the strength of the German armaments, in order to influence public opinion in favour of the large prospective increase in naval construction; this led to the re-opening of the discussion without achieving anything important. On the English side, it was finally suggested that an arrangement might be made whereby naval attachés of both Powers should exchange detailed information at given periods as to the progress of new work under construction, and that they should be authorised to convince themselves at the dockyards that the facts supplied corresponded with the reality. Tirpitz gave his consent reluctantly, provided there was no espionage; but the Kaiser refused outright. After a fresh proposal had been submitted by the Admiral, he formulated his decision as follows: In the event of England bringing forward new negotiations on the basis of complete reciprocity and equality of rights, we might propose, in accordance with the opinion previously expressed by Tirpitz, to build only three ships in a given term of years if England did not build more than four; in that case, the promise given by Metternich, not to bring in a naval budget in 1912, must be withdrawn. Here, compared with his attitude in the previous summer at Cronberg, the Kaiser made a certain concession to Bülow's line of thought. But the addition of a clause relating to the naval law, for which the Admiral declined responsibility, must have made it very difficult in advance to profit by the Kaiser's concession. Moreover, by April, 1909, the favourable opportunity had already passed.[1]

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[1] Metternich, December 29th, 1908, and January 1st and 14th, 1909.

The conclusion to be drawn from all this ventilation of the subject is, that in the summer of 1908 better relations might have been promoted with England by a concession with regard to the rate of construction. It might then have been possible perhaps not only to tie England down to a definite rate of increase but also to mutual political services, either in the form of a promise of neutrality or of some concession in colonial matters, such as the Bagdad railway. The Entente at that time was a very loose arrangement, especially as regards the relations with Russia; it would probably have been possible to draw England nearer to Germany in her national policy, for after all it suited British interest much better to stand as arbitrator between the various groups than to be permanently bound to any one of them. But this opportunity was not turned to account. Later on, when the possibility of such concessions was brought up for consideration, things had become much more difficult because the English Ministers had already decided to carry out an extensive naval programme. As definite offers could not then be obtained, the opportunity had gone for good. On April 29th Lloyd George laid his great Budget before the House of Commons and began his fight for it. After that he had no longer the same interest in securing German concessions as in the preceding months.

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[1] Metternich, March 3rd, 10th, 18th, 23rd, all in Tirpitz, 125-138. Tirpitz to the Kaiser, March 8th, Tirpitz, 128. Note to Metternich, March 19th. Bülow's despatch, March 27th. Tirpitz to Bülow, March 28th. The Kaiser to Bülow, April 3rd. (For this letter and a draft by Tirpitz of his proposal, *vide* Tirpitz, 145-149.)

In considering why this chance was left unused, we are obliged to confess that the decisive factor was the Kaiser's personal feeling that such a concession was humiliating to Germany, and also would not secure the desired effect. In this opinion he was zealously supported by Admiral von Tirpitz, who would, indeed, have liked to proceed more circumspectly, so as to prevent the odium of rejecting the negotiations from falling on Germany.

The Imperial Chancellor does not seem to have been consulted before the Kaiser's first and decisive remarks, which could not well be withdrawn, and he had become very careful about opposing ideas that dominated the Kaiser. He did not feel sure that England would contemplate binding engagements for her future political attitude, even for the sake of a considerable reduction in the German naval programme. He once wrote to Metternich that our building plans might be reduced, "if, in return, there was a definite prospect that in the event of armed complications we should not find England on the side of our enemies."[1] Even he does not seem to have grasped the whole seriousness of the situation; otherwise, considering that he had wanted to resign because of a few words in the Björkö Treaty, he would have taken stronger measures to gain a hearing for his views.

It is possible that an agreement such as King Edward and his Minister wanted might not have had the effect which Count Metternich foresaw, that England's attitude towards us would even afterwards have remained reserved; so at least thought von Stumm, who filled Metternich's place for a time in the autumn of 1908. The suspicion roused by our policy in Morocco and by the Björkö Treaty could not be cleared away just at once. But the attempt would at least have been worth making. It would practically have cost nothing, because the relative strength of our fleet in comparison to the English fleet remained exactly the same if England also renounced making a large increase. The policy advocated by Tirpitz was doubtless founded on a sound idea. The plea of insecurity which had been indicated in the memorandum of 1900 was thoroughly understood by England

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[1] Bülow to Metternich, December 23rd, 1908. *Vide* Tirpitz, 103.

and recognised by Lloyd George as justifiable. But Tirpitz's argument had one essential weakness. It is true that he did not aim at equalling the strength of the English fleet, for he recognised that England's special position required her to have a bigger fleet than ours; but he wanted to diminish the inequality, and ignored the fact that this depended quite as much upon the pace at which England continued to build as upon Germany. If this were speeded up at the same rate as our own, then, in spite of our increases, the old proportions would prevail. When representations were made to him in the matter, he declared that England's financial capacities could not stand the strain; the English nation would not shoulder the burden of taxation that would be necessary. This hypothesis was false, as subsequent events proved, and even had it been true, it still would remain extremely doubtful whether the English, once they realised they were unable to maintain the old conditions, would not have decided while their supremacy was still unimpaired to turn it to account by dealing Germany a powerful blow. Tirpitz thought they would then need to come to a compromise with hard facts; Metternich believed they would fight. But that question was never settled, for the time never came when England was no longer able to meet the demands for an increase of her navy.

It is difficult to understand how Tirpitz, the Kaiser, and to a certain extent also Prince Bülow, could believe that it was merely a matter of passing through a definitely limited period of danger. The truth was that the period was unlimited, as long as England was in a position to keep up the competition, protected by the old standard of power. At no time in future should we be relatively stronger with regard to England than we were then. It was a purely arbitrary assertion when Tirpitz stated, as he once did, that by 1915, when the reconstruction of the Kiel Canal and the fortifications of Heligoland had been completed, we should be through the danger period. Important as these two measures were for the effectiveness of our fleet, they left untouched the question of its relative strength compared with that of England. The example of the Athenians, who spoke Sparta fair until they had finished building their long walls, which the Kaiser and Bülow occasionally quoted, did not apply at all in the present instance, for the building of these fortifications was a definitely limited undertaking, the completion of which could only be interrupted from without. Here it was a question of an incalculable and, in a sense, unending problem, without disturbance from outside, for it could never be solved provided England's steadfastness did not desert her. Whether this happened did not depend on us, nor could we calculate when it would happen. Even if the final number of battleships as provided for by the naval law were reached, as it should have been in 1917, the question still remained whether the proportion of our fleet to the English fleet, meanwhile correspondingly augmented, would make the risks of war sufficiently great to deter the English.[1] Hence the whole increase of the navy brought us no substantial benefit, so long as we lacked the assurance that England would not go beyond the standard hitherto maintained. In the misapprehension of this condition of affairs and the interpolation of the national honour (which was in nowise affected) into the treatment of the whole circumstances, lay the reason why we let slip the last opportunity when it might still have been possible to prevent the Entente from becoming securely welded.

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[1] It is highly significant that Tirpitz in a report to his Sovereign on October 24th, 1910, himself admits: "If the English fleet is permanently and fundamentally made and maintained so strong as to make it safe to attack Germany, then German naval development, from an historical standpoint, was a mistake and Your Majesty's fleet policy an historical fiasco." With an eye on the Kaiser's trend of thought he added, "Germany's world position, in the existing political situation, would remain dependent on England's favour" (*Dokumente*, 184).

## XII. THE BOSNIAN CRISIS

In the Near East things had been comparatively quiet for a decade. Russia was busy in Eastern Asia; England had plenty to do in other parts of the world; Austria-Hungary harboured no designs for an increase of territory and was urgently desirous of the maintenance of existing conditions. Agreements with this end in view had been carried through in Vienna and St. Petersburg on several occasions, the last being on October 15th, 1904, during the Russo-Japanese war.[1] Both Powers then undertook to observe absolute neutrality if one of them without provocation was involved in war with a third Power, which threatened her safety or the *status quo* in the Balkans. Exception was made in the case of a conflict with one of the Balkan States. By this reservation Russia wanted to secure a free hand for herself in the event of Austria going to war with Serbia or Bulgaria.

Since then the situation had changed gradually to the detriment of Austria and in Russia's favour. Serbia especially was constantly drawing closer to Russia. Since the accession of King Peter in 1903 the South-Slav movement had made great progress in Serbia itself and the neighbouring States, vigorously fostered by the Pan-Slav party in Russia, and certainly not hampered by the Russian Government. In St. Petersburg, the two Montenegrin princesses were unremitting in their efforts to persuade the Czar that it was his duty, as head of the Slav world, to support this movement. Austria hoped by economic pressure to be able to force her neighbour to renounce these efforts and to change her national policy. A bitter economic warfare had been raging since 1906 between Austria-Hungary and Serbia. The success of the South Slav movement would have meant not only the loss of Bosnia, but probably also of Dalmatia, Croatia and

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[1] Pribram, i. 98.

Slavonia. Besides that, it was probable that a great Serbian State would seek to include the northern portion of Albania. This advance of the Southern Slavs into the Adriatic was very obnoxious to the Italians, and, in this respect at least, formed a new common interest between Vienna and Rome.

Bulgaria, where Austria had exercised a strong influence during the early years of Prince Ferdinand's reign, in Stambuloff's time had been gradually passing into the Russian sphere of influence since the Prince's reconciliation with Russia. By a secret treaty of 1902 Bulgaria had pledged herself to render Russia military service in the event of war with one of the Triple Alliance Powers, in return for which the Czar had guaranteed her territory.[1] Russia certainly was not in favour of the great Bulgarian plans that aimed not only at the acquisition of a large part of Macedonia and the Turkish province of Roumelia, but ultimately at the possession of Constantinople. The alliance was doubtless intended on Russia's part to hold back the Bulgarians from going too far with their plans of conquest.

In Bismarck's time and the decade following his dismissal, Germany had no interests of her own in the Balkan Peninsula. Her main aim had been to ward off any conflict between Russia and Austria. The fact that an effort was made to keep Turkey going and German officers were placed at her disposal to organise the Turkish army, did not in itself imply any departure from this policy. It was only in 1897, when Freiherr von Marschall went to Constantinople as Ambassador, that an alteration in German policy began to appear. Marschall was one of the most zealous champions of the idea that Germany's colonial future lay in Asia Minor, and that the extension of German and Austrian influence down to the Aegean Sea was the preliminary step to the realisation of these plans. In 1898, when the Kaiser made his second journey to the East, he became an enthusiastic believer in these ideas. Then, as previously stated, through the Kaiser's personal co-operation the consent of the Sultan was obtained for the construction of the Anatolian railway by German capital. The Kaiser ever afterwards took a strong personal interest in this enterprise, to which he had stood sponsor, so to speak. It was once referred to by the Ambassador as "His Most Gracious

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[1] Siebert, *Diplomatic Archives of the History of the Entente Policy*, p. 151, n. 1.

Majesty's own enterprise" ; the Kaiser himself called it "my railway."

But another and highly dangerous idea took possession of the Kaiser at the same time. In the event of our going to war either with England or with Russia, much as he desired to avoid it, the support of the peoples of Islam, from India and Turkestan on the one side to Africa on the other, would prove of great value to us. It was hoped that they would be both able and willing to start active rebellions in the colonial possessions of our opponents, and that the Sultan, as spiritual Head of the Islamic world, would undertake the leadership. It was a rôle that the Sultan was quite unfitted to play. The whole idea of a Mahommedan participation in a great war on our side was simply fantastic. This line of thought arose from the Kaiser's famous speech in Damascus, which caused such an unpleasant sensation in France and England. From this time on, the endeavour to retain the Sultan's friendship and to develop Turkey's military efficiency assumed quite a different relative importance within Germany's national policy, from that which it had formerly possessed.

In spite of the opposition manifested from the outset by Russia and her ally France, with her strong social and financial influence in the Near East, in spite too of England's hostility, which became increasingly evident, the Bagdad railway was prosecuted with great energy. In March, 1903, the Anatolian Company received from the Sultan not merely the right of continuing the railway down to the Persian Gulf but also a guarantee from the Turkish Government. The attempt to allow English capital a larger share in the enterprise and thereby to lessen England's opposition to the railway was not successful. In October, 1904, the line was opened as far as Konia. Thereafter Germany also had a strong interest of her own in the Near East, which at first certainly was purely economic, and according to the repeated assurances of German statesmen, concealed no political aspirations, though of necessity it was bound to entail political consequences in the course of time. Considering the great economic and strategic significance of the railway line from the Aegean Sea to the Persian Gulf (the most direct route between Europe and India), the other interested Powers could never assent to the view that it was a matter of indifference to them whether the railway was exclusively under German influence or not. For a long time the German Government held staunchly to the principle that their Eastern policy ought not to be affected by it, whereas Marschall strenuously advocated the opinion that this point of view could not be permanently maintained; that strong economic interests were everywhere bound to create political interests, and that German policy in the East must be placed on a new basis consonant with the altered conditions.

Since the beginning of Russia's approach to France and England, the question of the Bagdad railway had entered on a new phase. The opposition of the other Powers had hitherto been crippled by the lack of unity among themselves. In 1906, however, England and Russia came to the decision that they would only allow the construction of the line to proceed if Russia received the exclusive right to the branch line to Armenia and northern Persia, and England the control of the stretch from Bagdad to the Persian Gulf. By her treaties with the Sheik of Koweit, England had already begun to undermine the actual power of the Turkish Sultan over this region, and in 1903 Balfour had publicly declared that England would do her utmost to prevent the construction of a fortified harbour on the Persian Gulf by any other Power. In 1906 he refused his consent to a three per cent. increase in the customs as planned by Turkey, because it was feared in London that the increased revenue would be diverted to form a subvention to the Bagdad railway. England also sought to obtain from Turkey a concession for a rival line. The more closely the Sultan adhered to Germany, the less interest Russia and England naturally took in the maintenance of his empire and his authority. In the matter of the Macedonian reforms, England was constantly urging sharper measures. At her instigation the Sultan was compelled in November, 1905, by a naval demonstration of the Great Powers, to hand over to them the control of the Macedonian finances. England would have preferred to detach Macedonia completely from the Turkish Empire and convert it into an autonomous province. That might easily have become the signal for the complete dismemberment of European Turkey. Germany and Austria for the same reason were naturally opposed to this. But Russia also was unwilling to embark on these plans, not feeling equal to further military adventures after her defeats in the Far East, and owing also to internal dissensions. In the summer of 1906, when the Kaiser meditated a journey to Vienna, the question of our future attitude towards the Eastern problem was discussed in Berlin. Russia's association with the Entente was foreseen. In Algeciras we had had unmistakable evidence that Italy could not be counted on ; hence the certainty that, in the case of an eventual conflict, Austria was our only reliable ally. It was decided to reveal as little as possible of Germany's isolation in Vienna and to represent our relations with the other Powers as better than they actually were ;[1] but they could not permanently succeed in keeping the Vienna Government in ignorance of the general position of affairs. It was quite natural that from the moment they learned in Vienna that the Austrian alliance was absolutely indispensable for Germany, a fundamental change took place in the relations of the two Powers. Hitherto the leadership of the Triple Alliance had undisputedly remained in Berlin ; in all important international questions Austria had taken her directions from there. Now the utmost consideration had to be shown for Austria's wishes so as not to lose our last ally. If Austria liked, she could at any time force Germany into compliance by threatening to terminate the Alliance. The moment the Entente came upon the scene as a reality, the centre of gravity of the Triple Alliance began to shift from Berlin to Vienna.

While things were in this position, the change which took place in October, 1906, when the leading Austrian statesman, Count Goluchowski, resigned and was replaced by the former Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Freiherr von Aehrenthal, was of great importance. The selection of this man was the work of the heir to the throne, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, who for the first time made his influence felt in the policy of the Danube State. He acted upon the principle of being as conciliatory as possible towards the Slav elements in the Monarchy. It was often assumed that his ultimate aim was the incorporation of Serbia within the empire and its transformation into a tripartite monarchy. From his remarks at various times it is doubtful if his plans went so far and had actually assumed a clearly defined form. In any case, once he himself had made his influence felt and his nominee, Aehrenthal, controlled the foreign policy, Austria took a more definite line in the Balkan problem. On Aehrenthal's own admission it was inspired by strong political motives in home affairs. The aim was to counteract the growing tension among the various nationalities within the Monarchy by means of a successful foreign policy. Baron Aehrenthal was far from being an opponent of Russia. His many years' residence in St. Petersburg had brought him into close contact with Count Lamsdorff, and he long cherished as a possibility the renewal of the old league of the Three Emperors. But he was acting on the assumption that Russian policy would even in after years remain focussed on the Far East and be non-committal on the Balkan question. It was very doubtful, however, if Iswolski, who in May, 1906, replaced Lamsdorff, would continue Russia's earlier Balkan policy under the completely altered circumstances.

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[1] Bülow to the Kaiser, May 31st, 1906.

Alexander Petrovitch Iswolski, who had previously been Ambassador in Belgrade, Munich, Tokio and Copenhagen, belonged to the party of Russian statesmen who aimed at liquidating the East Asiatic policy of the last decade and considered that Russia's historic task was to liberate the Slavs of south-eastern Europe and incorporate them, in one form or other, in the Russian empire. According to his own statement in Copenhagen, he had prepared the decisive treaty with England in all its details through his discussions with King Edward. He was a firm supporter of co-operation with the Western Powers, as he naturally recognised in Austria-Hungary and Germany the greatest obstacle to the Balkan policy advocated by him. Subtle and crafty, vain and eager for his own advantage, he set himself from the outset to turn the Czar from his German leanings and to guide him right into the Entente camp.[1]

Aehrenthal received the impression from St. Petersburg that Iswolski would not prove so compliant as his predecessor towards Austria. For instance, Iswolski had warned him against harsh treatment of Serbia, which would offend public opinion in Russia. In the Straits question also he adopted a different attitude from that of Lamsdorff. In March, 1907, the news reached Berlin that Russia wanted to transfer the main portion of her war fleet to the Black Sea.[1] It was expected in consequence that Russia would take steps towards opening the Straits, or perhaps even towards dividing the whole region between Russia and England. The Kaiser feared that negotiations with this in view might already be contemplated in St. Petersburg and London, and felt it would be a severe blow for the position of Austria and Germany in the East.

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[1] *Vide Mémoires de A. Iswolski,* Paris, 1920; also F. Stieve, *Iswolski und der Weltkrieg,* Berlin, 1924.

At his meeting with the Czar at Swinemünde in August, 1907, the Kaiser sought to bind him to co-operate with Austria.[2] He assured the Czar that Germany would support every action in Turkey about which Russia and Austria were unanimous. In September Iswolski and Aehrenthal had an interview in which they agreed to advise the Sultan urgently to accept the moderate reforms in Macedonia recommended by them. But at the same time Iswolski remarked in confidence that he hoped the problem of the Straits would in time be settled in the Russian way, though he did not know whether England would be for it or not. Russia having lost Port Arthur, the centre of gravity for her naval power lay now in the Black Sea, from which access must be had to the Mediterranean. An Anglo-French supremacy ought not to be allowed to develop there. Aehrenthal avoided taking up a definite position, and declared that if need be Austria would define her attitude more precisely and would be guided entirely by her own interests. He begged Iswolski to inform him in good time before taking any definite steps and promised to do likewise if Austria intended to annex Bosnia.[3] He communicated the principal features of his conversation to Bülow and received the assurance that in this question Germany would give Austria's interests the first place in her consideration. The Russian plans were to be developed only if Russia had previously come to an understanding with Austria, and had allowed compensation to Germany for her *désintéressement*. Special care must be taken, the Chancellor thought, that Russia should not circumvent the Triple Alliance by coming to an agreement with the Western

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[1] The Kaiser to Bülow, March 16th, 1907 (about Hintze's news).

[2] Note on the meeting of the two Emperors, August 7th, Schön to the Foreign Office, August 10th.

[3] Aehrenthal to Bülow, November 3rd, 1907.

Powers. The Russians must not receive the key of their house from them alone.[1]

On returning to his post after the second Peace Conference, Freiherr von Marschall visited Aehrenthal in Vienna in December, 1907, on a special mission from Bülow, to discuss the whole situation with him. Marschall did not believe that the Sultan would accept the latest demands of the Powers with regard to Macedonia, especially the proposed judicial reforms. If he were to be compelled to do so, Salonica would have to be occupied, and that would be the signal for a general Balkan War. Aehrenthal, on the other hand, was of opinion that if the Sultan refused, the Balkan States should be allowed to fight it out among themselves. Marschall considered this very dangerous. He advised Aehrenthal to keep in touch with Russia so as to know what her plans were, but not in any way to allow himself to be intimidated or alienated from Germany. This Aehrenthal promised, and said finally that after the many economic successes of other Powers in the East he would like to get something for Austria too, and to request permission from Turkey to build a railway from Bosnia through the Sanjak to Mitrovitza. He counted on Germany supporting him.[2]

Aehrenthal's remarks to Iswolski and Marschall show clearly the direction in which Austrian policy was now moving. It aimed at the annexation of Bosnia and the extension of Austria's economic influence to Macedonia by circumventing Serbian territory. It was evident these measures would effectually bar Serbia's hopes of an independent Southern Slav Kingdom. A Sanjak railway under Austrian influence meant ultimately that Serbia would be isolated from Montenegro, Albania and the Adriatic.

On his return to Constantinople Marschall drew up an exhaustive report making clear the existing situation.[3] He was convinced that the Russian plan of settling the Straits problem would lead to a catastrophe in the Balkans. As soon as Russian warships entered the Straits, Russia would be master of Constantinople, and other Powers would no longer need ambassadors there; consuls would be enough. Bulgaria would at once attack and European Turkey would be completely dismembered. It was to be hoped that England, in her own interest, would not acquiesce in this; we could wait and see; but we must be prepared for anything. The success of the Russian plans would imperil the future of the Bagdad railway. Bismarck's phrase that Eastern questions were not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier no longer held good. Our commercial interests in the East were so great that they had acquired a political significance. We must defend them energetically, relying on our good cause and our strength, and not let ourselves be thrust out of the East. Nor could Austria be blamed if she now proceeded to action, so that later, when the general liquidation came about, she should have a say. We must strengthen her resolution. He concluded with the words " the well-known speech of His Imperial Majesty the Kaiser at Damascus, still wakens a response in the Mussulman world. That is an asset we must preserve. For the day may come when it will be of service to us." The Kaiser wrote underneath " very good," a sign that Marschall had struck the right note.

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[1] Bülow to Aehrenthal, December 8th, 1907.

[2] Marschall's note, December 14th, 1907.

[3] Marschall's report, December 1st and 12th, 1907.

Marschall was here only exhibiting the consequences of a situation which he himself had gradually brought about in the East. Maintenance of Turkey and alliance with Islam were henceforward to be not merely secondary and indirect but avowed and definite motives of our general policy. Hence he saw in Russia our natural enemy, in Austria our natural ally, so long as she did not wish to profit at Turkey's expense. He had been against supporting Austria's railway plans at first because they seemed to threaten the *status quo*, but now he thought it right to recommend them in view of the danger of an Anglo-Russian understanding on the Balkan question. A diversion in the Eastern question seemed to him now not undesirable, as the Powers had come to a standstill in the matter of the Macedonian reforms.[1]

Austria's decision to proceed with the construction of the Sanjak railway had been taken as early as the beginning of 1907, and communicated to Berlin, where no objections had been raised. The German Ambassador, Count Wedel, had even said that he considered the building of this railway a vital question for the Dual Monarchy.[1] In May Bülow promised Germany's support on condition that the Sultan gave his voluntary consent.[2] But it was only at the end of December that Aehrenthal negotiated with the Sultan a concession for a syndicate which had been formed in the interval, assuring him at the same time that the railway would only be used for economic purposes. The Sultan promised the matter his favourable consideration. Aehrenthal thought that the moment had arrived, because Russia was still weak and evidently not yet at one with England over the Balkan question, and Berlin was favourably disposed towards Austria's Eastern interest. It might quickly pass and ought to be turned to account.

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[1] Marschall, December 30th, 1907.

On January 27th, 1908, he told the delegations that the Government had decided to construct the Sanjak railway, for which an Act of the Berlin Congress gave authority. All the Great Powers had previously been informed. A few days later (January 31st) came the Sultan's official consent, which he had given doubtfully and reluctantly on Germany's recommendation. The preparatory work was reserved for a Turkish commission.

The plan had thus become public. Italy at once protested that contrary to the existing agreements she had not been duly informed beforehand. In St. Petersburg they were particularly annoyed. Iswolski declared that Austria's attitude made it difficult to uphold the Mürzsteg programme; it was an alarm signal. He supposed that Germany had not merely supported the plan but had inspired it; this was hotly refuted in Berlin.[3] Aehrenthal was building great hopes on France: he thought that she might join in concerted action on Eastern questions to counteract the spread of Russian and English influence. He was all the more bitterly disappointed when the French press gave his project an extremely hostile reception.

The Pan-Slav press, too, at once raised an outcry over the Austrian plan of extending her empire down to Salonica. Iswolski's comments became increasingly severe. He did not dispute Austria's right on the basis of the Berlin Treaty and with the Sultan's consent to build such a traffic-route; but he reproached Aehrenthal for not having informed him of it at their interview in the previous autumn; he had not behaved like a gentleman. Under these circumstances he himself could not co-operate as hitherto with Austria in the Balkan question. If a different grouping of the Powers gradually took place, the blame would not rest with him but with Aehrenthal's inconsiderate and egoistic course of conduct. Russia could not tolerate a *pénétration pacifique* of the Balkans by Austria. Iswolski was evidently seeking, by a plan for a railway from the Danube to the Adriatic, to obtain some compensation to offset the Sanjak railway.[1] At Vienna they professed no desire to raise objections to the construction of useful railways for making the Balkan countries more accessible, and the German Government also advised the Sultan to accept the Russian plan. At first Iswolski had feared that Austria might have promised the Sultan to veto the proposed reforms in Macedonia as an equivalent service, and was considerably relieved when he learned that this was not the case.

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[1] Count Wedel, March 15th, 1907.

[2] Tschirschky's note on an interview between Bülow and Aehrenthal, May 7th, 1907.

[3] Despatches to Count Wedel and Count Pourtalès, February 11th and 13th, 1908.

It seemed as if the incident had passed without seriously disturbing the relations between Russia and the Central European Powers. In fact, it had left behind deep disappointment in St. Petersburg. Iswolski seriously contemplated strengthening the relations entered into with England in the previous year. King Edward complied all the more willingly as his endeavours to come to an understanding on naval matters with Germany held out small prospect of success. But between England and Russia lay differences of interest in the Near East, uncomposed as yet. King Edward's visit to the Czar at Reval on June 9th and 10th, 1908, afforded an opportunity to discuss them.[2] But there is not yet sufficient information about the negotiations that took place, though this much can be said, that the meeting was one of the most important events of these years. Here it was that the foundations of a practical political Entente between Russia and England were laid, and here, too, Russian policy first turned decisively away from friendship with Germany.

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[1] Count Pourtalès, April 14th. Jenisch's note on a conversation with the Grand Duke of Hesse, May 29th.

[2] Siebert, p. 177. Count Pourtalès, June 14th.

It is moreover certain that England here modified her demands for reforms in Macedonia in order to facilitate Russia's co-operation in this question. A settlement was also reached of the difficulties in Persia. Probably, too, a common course of action was agreed upon as regards the Bagdad railway. The question of the Straits, on the other hand, seems not to have been mentioned.

The political situation generally was exhaustively discussed between Iswolski and Hardinge, who accompanied King Edward. Hardinge said, evidently speaking in the name of the Cabinet, that although England wished for the best of relations with Germany, yet in view of the soaring increase in German naval armaments it was possible that in seven or eight years a very strained situation might develop. It might then fall to Russia to hold the position of arbiter, and it was England's urgent desire that in the interests of peace and of the balance of power Russia might then stand equipped as powerfully as possible. In Berlin it was rumoured that King Edward had told the Czar that he was convinced that the plan of the Sanjak railway had been suggested to the Austrians by the Kaiser in order to annoy him and make him look ridiculous in Europe. When the Czar was questioned on the subject he declared that no such thing had been said, nor would he have believed it.[1] Even if no such incitements were uttered, this much is certain, that the Anglo-Russian friendship was not only greatly strengthened at Reval, but that it assumed a more definitely hostile bias towards Germany. Iswolski repeatedly hinted that if Germany wanted to restrain Russia from veering round to England, she ought not to identify herself so completely with Austria nor to work against the Czar at Constantinople. Our Ambassador, Count Pourtalès, considered this a false representation of the facts.

> "The decision as to the line of policy to be pursued by Russia in these next years depends not on Germany, as Herr Iswolski is always insisting now, but much rather on what England is willing to offer Russia." [2]

Naturally enough in Berlin they were full of anxiety about the Reval visit. Shortly after this meeting Bülow drew up his

[1] Despatch to Count Pourtalès, July 15th. Count Pourtalès, July 21st.

[2] Count Pourtalès, July 9th and 26th.

impressions of the situation in a series of memoranda for the Kaiser's perusal.[1] England, Russia and France, he considered, did not desire war at present.

> "I think, however, that it is also to the interest of all these Powers to make us appear nervous and uneasy. It has also this advantage for our enemies, that every real or apparent threat on our part causes the French to strengthen their eastern frontier defences, the English to build more Dreadnoughts, and the Russians to concentrate more troops on their western frontier."

The Imperial Chancellor deplored the publicity given to a speech of the Kaiser's at Döberitz to the officers there, in which he had spoken of the possibility of war within a short time: "We must work as silently as possible for the efficiency of our army and its readiness for fighting, avoiding everything that draws attention unnecessarily to our work, and gives rise to suspicion and intrigues."

In the matter of the Balkans he advocated working to avoid all forms of insurrection and general conflagration. "If it is permissible to embody in a formula our attitude towards the present phase of Eastern politics, it would run as follows: the needs, interests and wishes of Austria-Hungary must be decisive for our attitude in all Balkan questions." This principle was approved by the Kaiser with a reservation with regard to Bulgaria, and was communicated by the Chancellor in a circular letter to the Embassies (July 25th). Bülow further expressed to them the fear that the hitherto defensive agreement between the Entente Powers might develop, through fear of Germany's political and economic strength, into concrete alliances, and then, if the Entente Powers felt strong enough, be made use of to attack us. The dissolution of Austria-Hungary was manifestly expected. The conclusion ran as follows: "Loyal co-operation with Austria-Hungary ought to be and must be, in future, the fundamental principle of German foreign policy." This signified virtually the renunciation of a Balkan policy of our own. Marschall, strange to say, heartily approved and even uttered a warning against any attempt at intervention between Austria and the Entente, since that would rouse suspicion at Vienna and might loosen the alliance. Thus, said he, the encircling of Germany would become a fact, not by King Edward's doing, but by our own fault.[1] He evidently was firmly convinced that Austria's Balkan policy would not affect our interests in Turkey.

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[1] Bülow to the Kaiser, July 17th and 23rd.

All this was the more astonishing that there was no reliable information as to Aehrenthal's future plans in the Balkans. Von Tschirschky, after an interview with him, had only the vague impression that Austria would look on unperturbed at any new developments in the Balkans, in order to join in later on and, where possible, gain something for herself without risking anything, as had been done successfully in 1878. The German representative was highly doubtful of these gains without risks and of the prospects of such a policy in the present situation.[2]

Immediately afterwards there occurred those unexpected and revolutionary events which brought the Near East into the forefront of European politics. At the end of July, with all the Powers completely unprepared, the Young Turk Revolution broke out. The Sultan was compelled to proclaim the old constitution of 1876, which had only functioned for a short time, and to place Kiamil Pasha at the head of the new Ministry. There is no doubt that the Revolution was brought about by the efforts, which were becoming more and more obvious, of the Entente Powers to detach Macedonia altogether from the Turkish Empire.

It was doubtful at the outset whether this violent change, which, supported by the army and its leaders, had been carried through quickly without serious fighting, would strengthen or enfeeble the Turkish Empire ; nor did anyone know the political course the new Government would follow. German influence in Constantinople had depended hitherto on the personality of the Sultan, Abdul Hamid. It remained to be seen whether it could be maintained now that the virtual conduct of state affairs was transferred to a constitutional Ministry. But there were more urgent questions. The reforms for Macedonia, proposed by the Powers, were provisionally postponed until the scope of the new developments had been gauged. But what was to become of the vassal State of Bulgaria, and of Bosnia which had been transferred to Austrian administration, if the Turkish constitution came to life? Were they to be considered integral portions of the Ottoman Empire? Were they to send deputies to the Parliament in Constantinople, and were the laws and taxes there determined to take effect in these provinces or not? The Prince of Bulgaria and the Emperor of Austria had to ask themselves these questions and seek to solve them before the new Turkish Government had settled matters over their heads in a way that might lead to serious conflict. Aehrenthal had long been considering the annexation of Bosnia. After the outbreak of the Turkish Revolution he hesitated as to whether the right moment had come for settling this thorny matter.[1] Early in September, while visiting von Schön, the Secretary of State, at Berchtesgaden, he remarked that "in time" the annexation of Bosnia would be necessary; it would not be easy to find the right moment; in return for it he was willing to allow the Straits to be thrown open to Russia; but he would certainly only speak of such matters cautiously and without haste. At the same time, he declared himself willing to renounce the right of occupation in the Sanjak, and expressly stated that he had definitely given up the idea of an advance to Salonica. On the other hand, he described as a further aim "the clearing out of the Serbian revolutionary nest." Serbia might be given to Bulgaria. All this von Schön listened to and promised to support, only suggesting doubt as to how Italy would regard it and as to whether a greatly increased Bulgaria might not prove dangerous. Aehrenthal thought Italy could make no claims, as Austria was not aiming at any extension of territory, and Bulgaria, he hoped, would prove a peaceful State and a bulwark against the Russian flood.[2]

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[1] Marschall's comments on Metternich's report of June 20th.

[2] Tschirschky's report of a conversation with Aehrenthal, June 29th.

Very shortly afterwards, however, he must have decided upon immediate annexation. But before taking action he had first to find out how Russia would take it. Already in July he had hinted to St. Petersburg and at the end of August he had expressly declared that circumstances might occur which would compel Austria to proceed to annexation; he would then hope for Russia's friendly support, and would be ready in these circumstances to withdraw the Austrian garrisons from the Sanjak of

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[1] Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, August 29th and September 1st.

[2] Schön's note on his interview with Aehrenthal, September 5th.

Novibazar and to comply with Russia's wishes in the Straits problem.[1]

Iswolski considered this communication so important that he arranged for a personal interview, which took place on September 16th, at the Castle of Buchlau in Moravia, which belonged to the Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Count Berchtold. From the communications made shortly afterwards, by Aehrenthal to Bülow, and by Iswolski to Herr von Schön and to the Italian Minister, Tittoni, this much can be established about the details of this highly contentious question: Aehrenthal once more promised, if Russia agreed to the annexation, to evacuate the Sanjak of Novibazar and give up all extensions of the Austrian sphere of interest in the direction of Salonica. That Iswolski at once offered the annexation, provided that Austria proved compliant in the matter of the Straits, as Aehrenthal afterwards maintained, is scarcely tenable in view of the aforesaid Austrian note. In any case, Iswolski raised no objection of principle. On the other hand, Aehrenthal promised not to offer any opposition to Russia's wish that the warships of the States bordering the Black Sea should have free passage through the Straits, provided they passed singly and at intervals. It was assumed that the independence of the Sultan and the security of his capital would be guaranteed. Iswolski also thought that such an agreement would necessitate considerable modifications of the *Acta* of the Berlin Congress of 1878, which would require sanction by a conference of the participating Powers. To this Aehrenthal seems to have offered no objection. The repeal of Article 29 of the *Acta*, which contained restrictions of the sovereignty of Montenegro, was then arranged, evidently at Russia's wish. The possibility of a Bulgarian declaration of independence was also discussed; both Ministers in this instance agreed to observe a benevolent attitude and also to consent to the complete annexation of Crete by Greece. For the rest, the integrity of Turkey was to be guaranteed. Iswolski undertook to draw up the resolutions to which they had agreed and to send them to Vienna, probably in the form of an answer to the Austrian note of August 27th. It is not quite clear whether Aehrenthal had already given the date for the intended annexation more definitely. He himself maintained that he had said at that time "the action must be taken before the convening of the delegations."[1] This was probably correct. Iswolski's statement afterwards, that the question had only been ventilated in academic fashion and that he had expected that Aehrenthal in any case would wait for the promised written record of the agreements before taking decisive steps, is certainly wrong. For at the end of September, at Berchtesgaden, Iswolski himself had told Herr von Schön that he believed Aehrenthal would bring up the matter at the next session of the delegations, which were to meet on October 8th. It is therefore easy to understand that Aehrenthal believed himself to have a free hand with regard to Russia. He now set himself to prepare the details, and only when everything was settled did he inform his German allies. On September 26th, in a long private letter to Prince Bülow, he announced that he had come to an agreement with Russia and that he had been empowered by his Emperor to annex Bosnia and to evacuate Novibazar. The reason alleged for the latter was that to strengthen the garrison, which was necessary if the district was to be held, would cost a great deal and rouse distrust among the neighbours. The real reason was, no doubt, that Austria did not want to give Italy the right to demand compensations on the basis of the Triple Alliance Treaty. The Emperor Francis Joseph, the letter proceeded, would write privately to the Kaiser ; this letter would be delivered on the 5th or 6th October, the date fixed for the completion of the annexation. Italy had also been informed. Aehrenthal certainly had told Tittoni about it in a general way and, at Tittoni's wish, had empowered him to mention the matter to Iswolski, whom he was meeting soon. The Italian Minister had already proposed a conference for united action by Italy, Austria and Russia on the Balkan question, but was evidently not expecting anything to happen in the immediate future.

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[1] Austrian note to Russia, August 27th; communicated to Berlin, October 15th.

On the same day that Aehrenthal's letter was sent off to the Imperial Chancellor, Iswolski visited the Secretary of State, von Schön, at Berchtesgaden. He gave him a general idea of the conversations at Buchlau, but showed anxiety lest these proceedings might lead to graver complications than Aehrenthal expected. If war ensued between Turkey and Bulgaria no one could foresee the consequences: Serbia, too, might perhaps claim some extension of territory. A new European Congress would be necessary. He himself, he declared, would not have had the courage to set all these matters moving. But if Austria seized the initiative, Russia would then advocate "a thorough solution of all the existing Balkan problems" by means of a peaceful settlement of the differences. Schön took note of everything, but indicated that Germany would also expect equivalent services for her consent to a solution of the Straits question in Russia's favour.

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[1] Tschirschky, November 2nd.

On September 29th and 30th Iswolski visited the Italian Minister Tittoni at Desio. It was only then that the latter seems to have realised clearly the impending action. He was alarmed by the fact that Italy would be virtually excluded, and begged urgently at Vienna for a postponement of the annexation, but was met by a refusal. In vain he attempted to influence Aehrenthal by way of Berlin. His urgent desire was to form a three-sided Entente with Russia. He outlined, evidently in agreement with Iswolski, a programme which, besides recognition of the Bosnian annexation and the settlement of the Straits problem in Russia's favour, foreshadowed the complete sovereignty of Montenegro on condition that Antivari was not turned into a naval harbour. His plans, however, were forestalled.[1]

On September 23rd, before the annexation took place, Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria visited the Emperor Francis Joseph at Budapest. He wanted to ascertain what Austria was going to do. He knew that the annexation of Bosnia was imminent, and for his part made it quite plain that he would proclaim his country's complete independence of the Porte. Aehrenthal offered no objection to this, nor to the assumption of the title of King. It is doubtful if the aged Emperor was informed. No understanding was reached about the moment when the intended steps were to be taken. It appears that Aehrenthal wished to act first and expected that the Prince would follow him shortly afterwards. But Ferdinand wished to avoid the appearance of having been emboldened to strike his nationalist blow by Austria's example. Immediately on his return, the section of the Orient

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[1] Tschirschky, October 6th.

Railway running through Bulgarian territory was unlawfully seized, and on October 5th the independence of Bulgaria was announced and it was proclaimed a kingdom.

On the same day Austria carried out the annexation of Bosnia, although only two days earlier the 7th had been the date intended. The decision to expedite matters had evidently been taken at the last minute so that it might not seem that Austria's hand had been forced by Bulgaria. Nevertheless the simultaneousness of the two events was calculated to produce the impression of a manœuvre carefully planned between Vienna and Sofia. Aehrenthal himself afterwards admitted that it was a "cardinal blunder."[1]

In Serbia the press immediately began to rave about the breach of the Treaty of Berlin, and the threat to the future of the Serbian people; the Government asked for war credits and the Skuptshina placed the whole forces of the people at its disposal to protect their rights. The Crown Prince George delivered speeches threatening war and journeyed hurriedly to St. Petersburg to appeal in person for the Czar's help. On October 30th he received a friendly welcome, as did also the Premier Pasitch fourteen days later. A protest to the Great Powers was drawn up and territorial compensations by means of some division of Novibazar were at once claimed for Serbia and Montenegro. The Pan-Slav press in Russia joined in the cry. In England also public opinion was unanimous against Austria's breach of treaty and in favour of Serbia's national aspirations.

Iswolski was now in a very painful position. He had gone to Paris, and from there he intended to go to London with a view to obtaining the consent of France and England to throwing open the Straits. In Paris he received on October 2nd a written communication from Aehrenthal stating that the annexation would be begun within the next few days. He did nothing to delay matters, and indeed even talked amicably to the Serbian Minister to the effect that Serbia would lose nothing, as Bosnia had virtually been for a long time past in the possession of the Danube Monarchy; indeed, she would even gain, as Austria was withdrawing from Novibazar and thereby was surrendering also the Sanjak railway. This he had asked as an equivalent service when he agreed to the annexation. (This was absolutely untrue and should have shown the Serbians how much Russia cared for them.) Serbia alone could not wage war with Austria. Russia at present was not able to do so either, though, of course, he could not say so publicly. He advised Serbia to reach an understanding with Bulgaria and to wait quietly for the meeting of the European Conference at which all the necessary changes in the Treaty of Berlin would be settled.[1]

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[1] Jenisch to Bülow, November 7th, conversation in Eckartsau.

At this time he evidently intended to abide in the main by the agreements come to at Buchlau and to acknowledge them. Now, however, he found little acceptance for his view on the Straits question in Paris and even less in London. England was then urging on the Porte a strengthening of the fortifications of the Bosphorus, which, in fact, she carried out. In London the Russian Minister was informed that they were in sympathy with his aims, but did not consider the time opportune for opening up a discussion on the matter. It was an unmistakable refusal, though in courteous form. Iswolski could have small hopes of reaching his ends by means of a conference; the danger was now lest Austria should obtain the advantage she aimed at and Russia should be left empty-handed. He was the one who had been taken in, and at St. Petersburg the blame of the failure would be laid on him.

The more clearly he realised this, the more wildly he talked about the Serbians. In London he denied to the Serbian Minister that he had ever agreed to the annexation, but counselled moderation and renunciation of compensations.[2] From London he went to Berlin, where he became convinced that Germany meant to hold fast by Austria and to make the Alliance operative in its whole "brutality." [3] He tried to obtain a statement that they would not oppose the opening of the Straits if Turkey was willing; he even submitted the draft of a treaty, but did not get a definite assent, as in Berlin they aimed at obtaining some sort of compensation from Russia. In Berlin he had an interview with the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had hurried thither, and he now said distinctly that Russia would not recognise the annexation. Austria's foolish policy would soon be avenged in blood. He went on to declare that Russia must clear up all her problems outside Europe and prosecute her European aims again. But at present a conflict should be avoided as the country was not ready in either a diplomatic or a military sense.[1] The Czar also assured Pasitch in November that he would not recognise the annexation.[2]

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[1] Report of the Serbian Minister in Paris, October 5th (Boghitchetvitch, *Kriegsursachen* p. 151).

[2] Report of the Serbian Minister in London, October 13th (Boghitchetvitch, p. 157).

[3] Iswolski to Nelidow, November 5th (Siebert, p. 71, 779).

It is undeniable that Russian distaste for the annexation grew in proportion as the prospect of the opening of the Straits diminished. The Pan-Slav press naturally was loud in its denunciation of this new piece of Austrian ruthlessness. Public opinion in England and in Italy, for the most part, condemned Austria's proceedings as a breach of treaty.

How was German policy affected by these momentous events? The first indications of Aehrenthal's plans received little notice. In the end of September when more definite information came in, the Kaiser was at Rominten, Bülow in Norderney, Schön at Berchtesgaden; this made rapid decisions difficult. Aehrenthal's letter and Tschirschky's detailed information from Vienna went first to Norderney, then after considerable delay to Rominten, so that the Kaiser only learned of Austria's intention on the day of the annexation. He was indignant that he had been left so long in ignorance; but further, there was an acute difference of opinion between him and the Imperial Chancellor about the whole affair. The Kaiser sharply condemned Austria's action. It was piracy against Turkey; it was simply giving England the present of a cause for suspecting the Central Powers. "Austria cannot shake off the Bulgarian declaration of independence. Vienna will have to answer for her duplicity, and rightly! They have deceived us shamefully." He feared that the signal for the dismemberment of Turkey in Europe had now been given. "As their ally I am personally wounded in my deepest feelings." There had been sufficient time to inform him beforehand. "That is nice thanks for our help in the Sanjak question, when we had to endure Iswolski's rage for months on end, and for our complaisance in Vienna." Our whole position in Constantinople, which we had won by twenty years of friendly policy, had been imperilled by Austria's proceedings, as well as our relations with Greece ; Bulgaria was simply Russia's advance guard. " If the Sultan in his difficulty declares war and unfurls in Stamboul the green flag of the Holy War, I shall not blame him." [1] He was supported in these views by Marschall, who was indignant at Aehrenthal's policy and considered it very dangerous to play off Bulgaria against Serbia. " With such a policy," he declared, " Austria will drift into serious opposition to Russia." If we did not take up a position against the annexation, everyone would conclude it had been done with our consent. It implied an open breach of the Treaty of Berlin and opened the whole Eastern question. We must also refuse to acknowledge the Bulgarian declaration of independence. Austria had evidently completely altered her Straits policy without consulting us ; it was to be hoped that the knowledge of this would have a salutary effect. The Kaiser's comment was, " Bülow won't like that ! It is simply felony. The thanks of the House of Hapsburg ! " [2]

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[1] Milovanovitch, October 24th (Boghitchetvitch, p. 161).

[2] Telegram to Pasitch, November 12th (Boghitchetvitch, p. 149).

The Imperial Chancellor held a very different opinion. True to his creed that in the East we must support Austria's policy unreservedly, he ordered the Foreign Office to draw up a reply to Aehrenthal of which the fundamental note was to be, " La loyauté sans phrase." " The more difficult the situation in which the Austrian Minister finds himself, and the more uncertain the attitude of Italy and Russia, the more must Aehrenthal (and the dynasty behind him) receive the impression that we remain faithful." [3] Marschall was instructed to be extremely reserved in expressing his own private opinions. It would never do if he were to sacrifice the alliance with Austria or even to expose it to risks.[4] Bülow wrote to the Kaiser in the same strain. Bosnia, in a certain sense, should be regarded as compensation for the lost Italian provinces, and for the previous position of the Hapsburgs in Germany. Austria would never forgive us if we refused or were even dilatory in this matter. Aehrenthal evidently believed in the speedy dissolution of Turkey and wished to strengthen Bulgaria and prevent the formation of a great Serbian State. There was much to be said for this; and Russia seemed to be willing to agree. We were entitled to feel aggrieved that Austria had not previously informed us; but against that we had the advantage of being able to say truthfully to all the world that we had known nothing of the affair. Moreover, remonstrances at Vienna would have been perfectly useless, as they considered themselves much better able to judge the Balkan question. Although we had always advocated relying on Turkey, that advice had met with no acceptance.

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[1] Bülow to the Kaiser, October 5th, with copious marginal comments by the Kaiser.

[2] Marschall, October 3rd, 4th, and 9th ; comments by the Kaiser on the last report.

[3] Bülow to the Foreign Office, October 3rd.

[4] Bülow to the Foreign Office, October 5th.

The Kaiser admitted that the annexation must now be recognised. "I only regret having been brought by Aehrenthal's frightful stupidity into this dilemma of not being able to protect and assist the Turks, our friends, because my ally has injured them." England would now inscribe the defence of treaties on her banners and Edward VII. celebrate a great triumph over us. In Turkey German officers would soon be expelled and replaced by Frenchmen.[1] His vexation was not dispelled even after the Austrian Ambassador had sought to convince him that his Government had already been adequately informed at the beginning of September. Although many purely sentimental motives inspired the Kaiser's attitude, yet he also had the sound political feeling that in unreservedly upholding Austria's action we were creating a highly dangerous precedent.

Bülow showed none of this feeling. With easy-going philosophy, he shrugged his shoulders over the Balkan question, "our Hecuba" really, so long as the Bagdad railway was not interfered with. The other Powers would not treat the matter like a tragedy, much less fire guns over it. Compensation of some kind could be offered to Turkey for her tardy consent. In any case, we had no cause to criticise the decisions of our ally.[2] He sent word to Vienna, "our ally can count on us should difficulties and complications ensue."[3] He did so in the hope that it would never be necessary. He spoke in the same strain to Iswolski at the end of October, leaving Russia in no doubt as to Germany's unconditional support of Austrian policy. He himself informed Aehrenthal of this, and added that he could not give an opinion on the Serbian question. "I shall therefore regard the decision to which you ultimately come as that demanded by circumstances."[1] It was an unlimited blank cheque for the future.

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[1] Bülow to the Kaiser, October 5th. To Jenisch (in the Kaiser's suite), October 7th. Comments of the Kaiser on both letters.

[2] Bülow to the Foreign Office, October 7th.

[3] Note on Bülow's conversation with Count Szögenyi, October 13th.

Apart from Marschall, there was no lack of warning voices. In Rome, Count Monts was unsparing in his denunciation of Aehrenthal's policy and declared it would take many years to repair the mistake made. "With a slack structure like the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, it was unpardonable to initiate such a dangerous policy for a mere nothing." Bülow replied that Austria's retreat from the policy in which we had hitherto supported her would have been our retreat, "her humiliation, our humiliation." We should then have had to face the hostile group of Powers alone. We must stiffen Austria's back and must not bully her. Jagow, Kiderlen, Holstein and Moltke were also of this opinion.[2]

Naturally enough Iswolski made use of the *Daily Telegraph* revelations of Russia's action during the Boer War to tell the Czar that he had been deceived and betrayed by the Kaiser, just as he himself had been by Aehrenthal. The Czar was much depressed; hence his remarks to Pasitch. Then it was that the catchword was heard in St. Petersburg about the comradeship of the two defeated armies against the two empires, both of which had stolen two foreign provinces.[3]

Early in November the Kaiser visited the Austrian Emperor and the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Eckartsau and was again fully enlightened by them and Aehrenthal as to the proceedings preliminary to the annexation. The heir to the throne declared that if Iswolski persisted in his untruthfulness they would publish his written agreement from the Vienna archives. In order to make things easier for Russia, they were ready in Vienna, if necessary, to agree to a conference of the signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin, on condition that before the meeting the Powers had reached an understanding on all the points, so that only an official sanction was needed for the agreements previously concluded.[1]

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[1] Bülow to Aehrenthal, October 30th.

[2] Count Monts, December 9th. Bülow's answer, December 14th.

[3] Hintze, November 2nd.

In St. Petersburg feeling gradually quieted down. The Czar remarked to the German military attaché, von Hintze, that the annexation was bound to come some time, but the moment had been very badly chosen. He desired a clear public settlement of the Straits question, but he was indifferent as to Serbia and Montenegro, and he was the master in Russia.[2] He was certainly deceiving himself there, and on December 28th he wrote much less confidently to the Kaiser: "If Austria attacks one of these little countries, can you imagine the dreadful difficulty of my position, as I shall have to choose between the voice of my conscience and the heated passions of my people?"[3] Iswolski resisted longer than his master. On repeated occasions high words passed between him and the German Ambassador. Count Pourtalès said, "At Reval, Russia evidently consummated her adherence to the Entente; there is nothing left for Germany therefore but to ally herself even more closely to Austria, and to support her interests more ardently than she is required to do by the letter of the treaty." Iswolski replied that he found confirmed what he had already clearly felt in Berlin and he would inform the Czar fully. Later on, when he again threatened a closer approach between Russia and England, Count Pourtalès replied that if an Anglo-Franco-Russian encircling of Germany was really imminent, public opinion in Germany would press for an attack so as to break up the circle before it was completed. If Russia wished to avoid war she must consent to a compromise, especially as Austria, by evacuating the Sanjak, had shown that she did not contemplate any further advance. Before the conference Russia must consent to the recognition of the annexation. Iswolski, however, let it be inferred that he was really aiming at an autonomous position for Bosnia. At first he requested a free and full discussion of the annexation question at the conference, but ultimately agreed that the conference should not be convened till after an understanding had been reached by the Powers and that it should merely serve as an official sanction of the results secured.[1] The inclusion of the Straits problem in the negotiations at the conference was soon abandoned by Russia. On December 19th the Czar declared to Hintze that the conference ought not to be burdened with it, but that he would raise the question in a short time. Stolypin, the most influential of the Russian Ministers, demonstrated to the Czar and Iswolski that it was senseless to raise the question at present, because Russia had no fleet worth mentioning in the Black Sea.[2] Furthermore, there was the danger of alienating the Western Powers if this question were thrust into the foreground while there was still no agreement with them as to its solution. Yet their support was urgently required against Austria and Germany.

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[1] The Kaiser to Bülow, November 5th.

[2] Hintze, December 12th.

[3] The Czar to the Kaiser, December 28th.

Under these circumstances there was little practical significance in the Kaiser's telling the Czar, on Bülow's advice, that in the matter of the Straits he would raise no difficulties ; that these really existed in London ; and that he himself would willingly arrange with Russia for an exchange of views as to the best way of overcoming them. At first Bülow, indeed, had even contemplated saying expressly that Germany's attitude would be in accordance with the assurances given in the secret protocol of the Re-insurance Treaty of 1887 with regard to the Straits, although this treaty had expired.[3]

In January, 1909, an understanding was gradually prepared between Austria and Turkey. At the outset Turkey had been indignant and had retaliated by means of protests, military reinforcements, and a boycott of Austrian goods. But the Turks gradually realised that none of the Great Powers was prepared to intervene, and on January 12th they accepted in principle the proposal to recognise the new situation in return for an indemnity for the alleged public lands in Bosnia and Herzegovina and a few other economic concessions. The formal conclusion of the negotiations was reached on February 26th.

As soon as the possibility of this settlement came into view, the war spirit in Serbia manifested itself afresh. Hitherto she had consoled herself with the hope that Turkey's refusal would compel Austria to appear before the tribunal of the Great Powers and at least grant Serbia compensation. But now this hope had vanished. The rumour ran that Bulgaria had concluded a secret defensive treaty with Austria, who was aiming at supremacy in the Balkans and was intending to attack Serbia.

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[1] Count Pourtalès, November 1st and 25th, December 8th, 9th, 11th, 13th.

[2] Hintze, December 19th. Bülow to the Kaiser, December 25th.

[3] Bülow to the Kaiser, December 14th and 25th, with comments by the Kaiser. Bülow's note, December 15th.

In order to prevent war, France was desirous of intervening jointly with Germany and Italy. Bülow replied, however, that the moment had not yet come. "If we wait quietly," he declared, "France will be compelled to act by herself and thereby the encircling ring which has long been brittle will be definitely broken up."[1] As a matter of fact no one wanted war. England proposed a joint council of the Powers in Belgrade for the purpose of renunciation and disarmament; but Bülow contended that only a Russian declaration that Serbia would act at her own risk would be of any help.[2] In Austria General Conrad, the Chief of the General Staff, had all along advocated making use of Serbia's challenging attitude to declare war on this irreconcilable neighbour, and defeat her so thoroughly that she would be unable to agitate for a long time to come. He pointed to Russia's temporary inability to help her protégé, and repeated his warning that the reckoning must come some day and that later on it would come under much less favourable circumstances. The Chief of the German General Staff agreed with him absolutely. Aehrenthal too was at first in favour of solving the difficulty by a rapid attack on Serbia. In the middle of December he proposed to the German Imperial Chancellor to take grave steps unless Serbia yielded completely within the next two months. He certainly added that even then they would not violate the territory of their neighbour. "I shall hope," he wrote, "that along with this declaration rapid military action will banish the dangers of which I have spoken."[3] Soon afterwards, however, he changed his mind because, as Austria was not aiming at any extension of territory, there was no object in war commensurate with the expense and danger involved. The crippling of Serbia, carefully prepared, could easily be achieved in future through the expansion of Bulgaria at her expense. He therefore decided, if it were at all possible, to give the preference to a peaceful solution; but he still considered it necessary, if no improvement had taken place by March, to demand from Serbia an explicit recognition of the annexation and a declaration "that she harboured no designs and would therefore suspend her unwarranted armaments, which were ruinous for the country." In return, Austria would be willing to consent to the renewal of the commercial treaty and to improve the railway communications. If this were declined, an ultimatum would follow. He expressed the hope that Germany would use her whole influence in St. Petersburg to avert aggressive intervention by Russia.[1]

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[1] Bülow to Tschirschky, February 6th, 1909.

[2] Bülow's report of his conversation with Hardinge, February 10th, 1909.

[3] *Vide* the detailed information in Conrad von Hötzendorff's *Lebenserinnerungen*, i. 39; Moltke's letter of April 10th is given on p. 165. Aehrenthal to Bülow, December 12th, 1908.

In St. Petersburg they were very unwilling to press hardly on Serbia, as it would cause bitter disappointment and injure their own prestige. But England and France distinctly said that public opinion in their countries would not support Russia in this question. Hence they fell back on dangerous half-measures. It was arranged that united action should be taken by the Great Powers at Belgrade; the Serbian Government was advised by all to renounce territorial compensations and the claim of autonomy for Bosnia, as the Powers could not support these demands. Russia, isolated, advised the suspension of military measures (March 2nd); the Powers would then be able to apply themselves to further Serbia's interests; the Bosnian question must be left to their decision. At the same time she gave the assurance that the annexation would not be formally recognised by the Powers. After long hesitation, on March 10th, Serbia made the declaration that she renounced all military measures and left the decision of the Bosnian question with the Powers without making any claims for herself.[2] While these negotiations were in progress Russia complained bitterly in Paris of the lack of French support; she discussed with Serbia a general plan of campaign in case war broke out and sought to ensure Roumania's neutrality in that event. On the other hand, Austria was not content with the Serbian note because it contained no explicit recognition of the annexation.

After March 10th events moved rapidly towards a decision.

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[1] Aehrenthal to Bülow, February 20th, 1909.

[2] Cf. Siebert, p. 76.

In St. Petersburg on the 13th a council of Ministers and Generals was held under the presidency of the Czar to decide the question whether, and in what circumstances, Russia should take up arms. Iswolski, it seems, was in favour of war, on certain conditions; nevertheless it was decided not to intervene, even in the event of war between Austria and Serbia. Iswolski himself communicated the news to Berchtold and Pourtalès; to the latter with the instructive comment that Russia was not arming "as she was neither willing nor able to wage war at present." The Government was strong enough to carry out this decision in spite of dissentient elements.[1] The reason plainly lay in the lack of sufficient armaments.

However tranquillising this communication might prove, it was bound to revive the fear of Russia's insisting that the signatory Powers should decide the question of the validity of the annexation and thereby confirm the Serbian standpoint. The situation was intensified by the plan of the Vienna Government to submit, and eventually to publish, the documents in their hands relating to Iswolski's earlier promises to the Czar and to the Premier Stolypin. Iswolski wished to prevent this, although these documents gave only indications reflecting on his truthfulness, for he himself had not committed anything to writing. He requested the Berlin Government to intervene for him.

Bülow used the opportunity to tell the Russian Ambassador that he was willing to act as mediator so as to facilitate an honourable retreat for Iswolski out of his difficult situation. He was prepared to inquire in Vienna whether and under what conditions Austria would be willing to seek from the signatory Powers the formal recognition of the annexation, provided that Russia urgently admonished Serbia to keep the peace. If that were not done, we must then allow our ally to proceed in the way she judged fitting.[2] Iswolski accepted this proposal suspiciously. He was, he declared, consequently to allow the Austrians to deal with the Serbians as they thought fit and to refuse to discuss the disputed points before the conference. Count Pourtalès said to him that the conference could still be held, as the official termination of the incident, if Russia wished it, provided an agreement had been reached by the Powers and that the various points had been settled beforehand.[1] Iswolski persisted in representing the conference as the main thing and in making the programme for it as comprehensive as possible. On March 20th he finally made the very guarded declaration that although he was convinced that Austria had decided on war with Serbia ultimately, he would hold it his duty, if Vienna requested the formal sanction of the Powers, "to meet this *démarche* with the honest desire to find in it the elements of a solution acceptable to all the signatories of the Berlin Treaty." Nevertheless, the possibility of a conference ought not to be thereby excluded.[2] Iswolski was manifestly seeking to entangle Austria in some imprudent submission to the decision of the Great Powers, which could also be used against the annexation.

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[1] Count Pourtalès, March 17th and 18th.

[2] Bülow's note on a conversation with Count Osten-Sacken, March 13th.

In Vienna there was a great divergence of opinion. The army corps posted along the Serbian frontiers were considerably reinforced, and the General Staff advocated using the present opportunity boldly for the chastisement of this obstreperous neighbour. Only the overthrow of the Serbian forces and the complete destruction of the Serbian armaments could procure quiet for some decades. The heir to the throne also considered war unavoidable, if Russia did not hold herself responsible for Serbia's keeping the peace permanently. Certainly, even by a victory in Serbia there was little or nothing to be gained; on the other hand, things must be cleared up, and inconclusive promises were of no use. The finish was bound to come some day, and "in a few years the situation might easily have altered to our disadvantage."[3] But Aehrenthal persisted in his view that there was no sense in going to war with Serbia. For what could happen after victory to ensure lasting peace there? A binding assurance had been given to the Czar that no attack would be made on the independence and integrity of Serbia. He had given up the idea of partitioning the country among Austria, Roumania and Bulgaria, which he had outlined to our Ambassador in January; the incorporation of Serbia within the

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[1] Count Pourtalès, March 15th and 16th. Note by Schön on a conversation with the Russian chargé d'affaires, March 16th.

[2] Count Pourtalès, March 20th.

[3] Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, March 14th. Von Kageneck, military attaché, March 18th.

Monarchy was impossible at present owing to internal dissensions. That he regarded this as the assured solution at a later date he indicated quite definitely. For the present a war indemnity of 500 millions might be asked and Belgrade occupied as a pledge till the completion of the payment, which would be by small and deferred instalments. In this way Serbia could be kept "as long as possible under the Austrian yoke." It was a matter of indifference to him who reigned there; he even discussed the possibility of a Serbian republic.[1]

But this plan offered no prospect of a final solution of the Serbian question, and the temporary success which it might achieve was not sufficient compensation for war. In Vienna they did not know their own mind and were constantly hesitating between the various possibilities, all of which were unsatisfactory. Should they rest satisfied with promises when there was no doubt that they would be broken at the first opportunity? Should they not rather fall upon Serbia and render her powerless, at least for some time? Aehrenthal's view finally prevailed. It was decided to keep the peace provided Serbia acknowledged the annexation and pledged herself to good behaviour; and also provided Russia gave her unconditional assent. While negotiations were proceeding with England and France over a new formula for the Serbian declaration, word came to Berlin that Austria was prepared to request the formal sanction of the Powers provided they, including Russia, bound themselves beforehand to give their formal consent.[2]

The Imperial Chancellor thereupon instructed Count Pourtalès to make confidentially the following communication in St. Petersburg: Germany was ready to advise the Austrian Government to seek the formal consent of the Powers, but it must be definitely ascertained that Russia would agree to the Austrian note and declare her formal consent to the repeal of Article 25, without any reservation. The Ambassador was then to say definitely, "that we expected a deliberate answer Yes or No. Any evasive, conditional or vague reply would be considered equivalent to a refusal. We would then withdraw and allow things to take their course; the responsibility for whatever followed would then rest with M. Iswolski." As the position of affairs between Austria and Serbia urgently demanded a solution, a clear and immediate answer was indispensable. Later on it could be decided whether or not a conference should be held. "Its introduction into the present concrete question we must regard as an attempt at obstruction and therefore as a refusal of our proposal." [1]

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[1] Tschirschky, March 19th.

[2] Tschirschky, March 17th and 21st.

Iswolski received this communication, which was couched by Pourtalès in the most friendly terms, about March 22nd, and replied that he would seek his Emperor's orders. On the same day the Czar telegraphed to the Kaiser that he was delighted that Germany had procured this possibility of a peaceful solution and would instruct Iswolski to accept it; he urgently begged the Kaiser under all circumstances to prevent military measures against Serbia.[2] On March 23rd Iswolski gave the German Ambassador the formal declaration that Russia, if Austria asked, "would not fail to declare her formal consent to this request, without making any reservation in her answer." He hoped that Germany, after this proof of his goodwill, would endeavour in Vienna to have the English proposals for intervention used in drafting the lines of the note to be sent by Serbia to Vienna.[3] Iswolski did this very unwillingly. As he said in writing to London and Paris, he regarded the German communication as an action planned in Vienna and Berlin admitting of no refusal; the alternatives had been, acceptance of the proposal or the invasion of Serbia. As there was no other way of protecting Serbia, they had to yield.[4] This conclusion was peculiarly painful for Russia, because the Czar himself and Iswolski—which, of course, they could not know in Berlin—had promised the Serbians not to recognise the annexation. The German demand was virtually an ultimatum to which Russia had to yield because she was not equipped for war. The English Ambassador, Nicolson, who had shown himself hostile to Germany at Algeciras, did his utmost to intensify these feelings.

Was it necessary for Germany to intervene in this fashion and draw down on herself the odium of having humiliated Russia? Could we not have waited calmly to see what decisions Russia would come to? She had been obliged to give way at the critical moment because she neither would nor could fight; but why should Germany, who was only indirectly interested, have hastened on this moment? It was the first time that we had thrust ourselves into the front line on Austria's account instead of remaining in the background to cover her rear. It was the first demonstration of the principle laid down in the previous year that Austria's interests in the East were also ours. By offering Russia a pretext for denouncing our action to the Western Powers as a threatening interference in a matter remote from ourselves, we strengthened Germany's reputation of thirst for mastery and leadership, which was already sufficiently obnoxious to France. We imagined we were opening a dignified means of egress for the Russians from the cul-de-sac which they had entered by their own fault, and that we were fulfilling a duty towards our allies and to the peace of Europe, and earning as far as possible Russia's gratitude. As a matter of fact it would have been more painful for Russia if Serbia had been occupied by Austrian troops. In so far they did feel a certain relief in St. Petersburg, and the Czar himself really felt the thanks which he expressed in his telegram to the Kaiser. But with Iswolski, anger at the insult received outweighed all other considerations, as is evident from his statements sent to London and Paris.

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[1] Despatch to Count Pourtalès, March 21st (drafted by Kiderlen).

[2] Count Pourtalès, March 22nd. Telegram to the Czar, March 22nd.

[3] Count Pourtalès, March 23rd.

[4] Count Pourtalès, second telegram, 28th March. Iswolski to the Russian Ambassador in Paris and London, March 23rd (Siebert, p. 104, cf. p. 109).

Before they had learned in Vienna of the success of Germany's measures with the Czar, the Austrian war party had again gained the upper hand. A Council of Ministers, on March 29th, decided upon active measures against Serbia and issued the necessary orders for mobilisation—General Conrad already believed the game was won. Almost immediately thereafter the news from Berlin must have arrived. On March 31st, Serbia issued her well-known declaration of loyalty, promising, in addition to abstaining from further protest against the annexation, to disarm and to keep the peace in future. Prince George was compelled to renounce the succession to the throne, for as he had thought that he could promise Russian help for a certainty, he was hopelessly compromised. Aehrenthal declared the crisis at an end, since complete success had been obtained.[1] The equally acrimonious dispute between Bulgaria and Turkey was com-

[1] Conrad, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, i. 162.

promised through Russia's intervention and ended in Ferdinand being recognised as independent Czar of Bulgaria. Russia had bound Bulgaria to herself by generous financial support and had brought her again within her sphere of influence.

The effect of these events was felt far and wide. The preponderance of the Austro-German bloc in continental questions had shown itself unmistakably. Russia felt herself more than ever thrown back on the Western Powers, and now considered the strengthening of the Entente a vital question. Although Iswolski had perhaps hesitated earlier as to whether Russia would not find it more profitable to come to some amicable arrangement with the Central Powers, who seemed more inclined than the Western Powers to make her substantial concessions in the Straits question, from now onwards he was secretly committed to the Entente Powers; and all his friendly remarks to the German representatives about the necessity of restoring the good old relations were, on his lips, sheer insincerity. The Russian Ambassador in Paris also urged closer relations with the Entente; it was only the existence of strong enemy forces that could, without war, deter the Triple Alliance from further aggressions. When Russia's military strength had been renewed she would be able, with the help of the Western Powers, to compel Austria to renounce her Balkan plans, and to restore to Serbia her freedom of action.[1]

During the height of the crisis the Czar remarked that he had the feeling "that a clash with the Germanic race was inevitable in the future and that we must prepare for it," words that a year earlier were hardly thinkable, coming from him.[2] The Pan-Slav faction now began gradually drawing within its own circle the feeble Sovereign, who felt himself deeply humiliated by having been forced to break his plighted word. There was also disappointment at the lack of support from England and France; but Germany was the real rock of offence. Our military attaché in St. Petersburg, Captain von Hintze, repeatedly expressed his conviction that Russia would attack as soon as her armaments were adequate, and that all her appearance of friendliness was only to deceive us and keep us in suspense until the right moment had come, which would be in from three to five years' time.[1]

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[1] Report of April 1st (Siebert, p. 109).

[2] Koshutitch, March 6th (Bogbitchetvitch, p. 150).

After all, what had Austria gained by the whole incident? She had renounced her rights in Novibazar; she had deeply insulted Serbia and compelled her to make a humiliating declaration, which offered no guarantee for the future; she had roused everywhere the fear that she was pursuing unlimited plans of conquest; and she had placed Bosnia, her possession of which was undisputed, in a somewhat clearer position legally. The position was by no means absolutely clear; for Bosnia, as a province, could not be incorporated by either of the two halves of the Dual Monarchy, and formed a more serious danger in its new status than before, when it was merely one among the other loosely annexed States entrusted by Europe to Austrian administration. Moreover, to have carried out the annexation without previously consulting the signatory Powers constituted undoubtedly a breach of international law, which had been meagrely rectified by the subsequent recognition, but nevertheless threw a dubious light on the loyalty of the Monarchy. Yet we had covered her rear without asking if she were in the right. Vienna had certainly sent us word before the deed was done, but they had not consulted us in time to get our opinion; they had simply claimed, and had been given our help, as a duty rendered as a matter of course. Certainly, something had to be done to prevent Bosnia being drawn within the sphere of influence of the new Turkish constitution, but a prudent and far-sighted Austrian statesman would have found a less dangerous way. This point of view did not make a strong appeal to Aehrenthal. His whole desire was to score an immediate success so as to strengthen his position at home. "I hope the affair succeeds!" said he to Tschirschky at the beginning of the crisis. "If not, I shall be discharged of course. But then at least we shall go down with honour; otherwise we should sink miserably, step by step."[2] When the solution at which he had aimed had been reached, he did not feel satisfied with it, and admitted to the German Ambassador that he had really been hoping that England or Serbia would wreck the action for intervention. "What is the use of it, if the existing differences between Austria-Hungary and Serbia have to be bridged by declarations on Serbia's part which are practically worthless? Austria will not thereby gain final peace on her south-eastern frontier, and within a few years we shall probably have to make another move."[1] It was the severest criticism of his own policy. This first Serbian crisis is especially significant, as it shows all the characteristic features that reappeared in the second, which led to the world war. Austria draws up her plans without consulting Germany, informs her just before putting them into execution, demands and receives unconditional support. Russia immediately intervenes on behalf of Serbia and seeks to give the matter a European aspect, while Germany and Austria endeavour to localise the conflict. Germany, to a certain extent, endeavours to restrain Austria, but leaves St. Petersburg in no doubt that she will support Austria, if need be, with all her might. She is manifestly inspired by the resolve not to risk losing her last ally. If Austria is compelled to yield, Bülow writes on December 14th, 1908, we shall have to face the same group alone and submit to the same fate. Indeed, it is reckoned an advantage that Austria should act first, so that we do not stand alone, which might have been the case in other warlike contingencies, in spite of the Alliance. In the event of war, it has been arranged already to conquer France first of all, as she cannot remain neutral. On February 21st, 1909, the Kaiser writes: "Our army cannot in any case expose itself to a situation which requires half of its strength for Russia and the other half as protection against an uncertain France."[2] We were counting on England's neutrality, at least until the opponents on both sides were exhausted, and Great Britain could say the decisive word.

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[1] Hintze, February 24th, March 27th, April 3rd.

[2] Tschirschky, December 7th, 1908.

The fundamental difference was that in 1909 Russia was absolutely unready for war; France's preparations were extremely incomplete; and England was faced by serious internal dissensions and, owing to the loose construction of the Entente, had much greater freedom of movement than was the case five years later.

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[1] Tschirschky, March 26th, 1909.

[2] Comment of the Kaiser on a report of Tschirschky's of February 21st, 1909.

# XIII. QUIET AFTER THE STORM

After the turbulent excitements of the winter of 1908-1909 there ensued a period of suspense and apparent tranquillity in international affairs. It served as a breathing space for adjusting matters in the various domestic crises—the constitutional struggle in England, the financial reforms in Germany and the liquidation of the Revolution in Russia—and for the feverish strengthening of their armaments by all those States which had been compelled to yield during the Bosno-Serbian crisis because they were not ready to face a declaration of war.

During the most critical period an event had taken place which was generally regarded as a sign that the tension was relaxing—the conclusion of a Franco-German treaty over Morocco, on February 9th, 1909. The Algeciras Conference, for reasons with which we are familiar, had not been able to secure a thoroughly satisfactory condition of affairs. As early as the autumn of 1906 fresh disturbances were said to have broken out; probably these were no worse than usual and could not be judged by European standards, but they were deliberately exaggerated by the French in order to provide them with an excuse for further interference. Spain and France sent warships to Tangier, and Germany protested against the landing of troops without previously obtaining the sanction of the Powers which took part in the Conference, and even considered sending ships herself; but this the Kaiser's personal intervention prevented.[1] France assumed an air of injured innocence, because Germany was the only one of all the Powers who had suspected her of wishing to contravene the Algeciras Treaty.[2] At Germany's suggestion the Sultan sent troops to Tangier; order was restored; and at the end of January, 1907, the Spaniards and the French withdrew and serious developments were avoided.

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[1] Bülow to the Kaiser, December 1st, 1906, with comments by the Kaiser. Jenisch to Bülow, December 2nd.

[2] Prince Radolin, January 13th, 1907.

During these proceedings the German Ambassador in Tangier, Dr. Rosen, had proposed using the last article of compensation left in our hands in Morocco, our influence over the Sultan, for the purpose of requesting an equivalent from France while there was still time. He was told that idea could not be entertained at present, " as we cannot abandon so quickly the ground on which we have built up our whole attitude in the Morocco question." [1] Shortly afterwards Mulai Hafid, the Sultan's brother, revolted against him and gained a strong following in the country. France offered to help the Sultan, naturally in return for considerable concessions; Germany advised him to reply by a courteous refusal, which gave an opportunity in Paris for bitter remarks about " a policy of pin-pricks." [2]

In the end of March, 1907, the French doctor Mauchamp was murdered in Marrakesh. France utilised this incident to demand, not only punishment and compensation, but also the immediate settlement of all the accumulated grievances and the speeding up of reforms. She occupied the frontier town of Ujija as security. Germany counselled the Sultan to yield, stipulating, however, that the views of the Conference Powers should be ascertained as to how far the acceptance of these claims was compatible with his independence.[3] In France they clearly detected German influence behind the Sultan, and again tried to find out whether some general colonial agreement were possible by which Germany might receive compensation elsewhere and renounce all claims in Morocco. Rosen urgently advised acting on this suggestion, as our influence over the Sultan would gradually decline if we would neither protect him actively nor assist him financially, and once it had disappeared we should no longer count for anything with France. But the Kaiser, not at this period aware of France's previous offer, demanded too high a service in return—a firm alliance with Germany, which, of course, would have implied the renunciation of the idea of revenge.[4] This was very far from being the French view; on the contrary, about this time Cambon took an opportunity to say casually that the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine had been a blunder on Bismarck's part. The Kaiser was still cherishing the dream of Björkö, and Bülow confirmed him in this. "We must avoid the appearance of bargaining in Morocco, as if we were selling it for a mere *pourboire*." Germany was much too powerful to require such methods; our position in the world of Islam, which was an important factor, must not be sacrificed.[1] We know this tune. It came from Marschall's repertoire and never failed of its effect on the Kaiser. For the first time the Kaiser here pointed out to the French that their alliance with England might cost them dear, as in the event of war they would have to pay for England's broken crockery. It was the so-called "theory of hostages" of Holstein's day. We were to balance our anticipated defeat at sea in a war against the Western Powers by crushing France with our overwhelming superiority of numbers and occupying her territory until England redeemed it by concessions. The Kaiser intended thereby to prove that France would be much safer with a German than with an English alliance. But this line of thought always, as soon as it was even suggested, roused the French to a state of frenzy.

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[1] Rosen, December 21st, 1906. Tschirschky to Rosen, January 1st, 1907.

[2] Rosen, March 1st, 1907. Prince Radolin, March 8th, 1907.

[3] Despatch to Rosen, April 18th, 1907.

[4] Rosen's notes on a conversation with J. Cambon, June 6th, 1907. Rosen, June 21st. The Kaiser to Bülow, June 26th.

Fresh outrages on Europeans, said to have been committed in the seaport of Casablanca, gave the French a pretext for landing troops there in August, 1907, and for the temporary establishment of a French police force in several seaport towns. France all the time asserted her adherence to the Algeciras Treaty, and Germany was reduced to watching, inactive and with a wry smile, her further advance. In remaining passive Bülow was actuated by the desire not to disturb our slowly improving relations with England. Shortly after the Kaiser's visit to Windsor he issued instructions to handle the Morocco question in such a way that the "English should not receive the impression that, counting on the improvement in our relations with them, we were again trying to deal cavalierly with France." To the inflamed dispute over the succession to the Moroccan throne, Berlin was at first very guarded in its attitude, but gradually it inclined towards considering Mulai Hafid, whose adherents were constantly increasing, as the future actual ruler of the country. France remained loyal to the old Sultan, Abdul Aziz, who was compelled to retreat to the coast town of Rabat and now possessed very little actual authority. On January 4th, 1908, the Ulema solemnly announced his deposition. The constant disturbances afforded France the pretext to land further troops, which by the beginning of 1908 had penetrated to a distance of 100 kilometres into the interior and were evidently intended to block Mulai Hafid's path to Fez.

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[1] Bülow to the Kaiser, June 27th, 1907.

In Berlin they were now in a quandary. Bülow instructed the Secretary of State, von Schön, to inform M. Cambon on every opportunity that we could not look on "with indifference at certain possible encroachments by the French," but to avoid all threats of war. He did not wish to force the Western Powers closer to one another. He wished to produce the impression that after the expiry of the five years' truce, as provided in the Algeciras Treaty, we were willing to discuss matters, provided France had not landed us in embarrassments. Cambon always maintained that there was nothing they more ardently desired in Paris than to be able to recall the troops quickly.[1] In May, 1908, when Mulai Hafid sent a special ambassador to Berlin requesting them to recognise him and to urge France to withdraw her troops, the German Government loyally consulted Paris, and at France's desire replied that the recognition could only be sanctioned once all the Conference Powers had expressed their agreement.[2] Even in June, when Mulai Hafid had gained complete possession of the capital, Fez, Germany refrained from all interference, as France considered the time not yet ripe for recognising him. This was done in spite of the feeling that France was only standing by Abdul Aziz in order to prevent the country settling down and so depriving her of a pretext for military adventures. As France kept on delaying, she was informed that there was no mandate for France and Spain to negotiate in the name of the Powers with Mulai Hafid and determine the condition of his recognition; and the question of the formal recognition of Mulai Hafid was raised with the other signatory Powers (August 31st). At the same time Mulai Hafid was advised, through Dr. Vassel, to promise compliance with all the conditions laid down in the Algeciras Treaty.[1] In Paris and London this was looked upon as an attempt to take precedence of France with the new ruler; Mulai was generally regarded as the protégé of Germany, and the defeat of the old Sultan therefore a defeat for France.

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[1] Bülow to Schön, April 24th, 1908. Schön's note on a conversation with Cambon, April 28th.

[2] Langwerth von Simmern's note of a conversation with the Moroccan Envoy, May 13th, 1908. Prince Radolin, May 16th and 21st. Despatch to Rosen, May 29th.

On Germany's advice Mulai Hafid announced his accession to the throne to the Powers, but let it be understood that he could not undertake blindly all the pecuniary obligations his brother had privately entered into with France.[2] When France submitted the draft of the conditions requisite for recognition by the Powers, Germany raised various objections to the text of the document, and while these negotiations were proceeding a new and painful incident occurred. The German Consul in Casablanca sought to assist some deserters from the Foreign Legion, who were not even all Germans, to escape on board a German vessel, and was forcibly prevented from doing so by French soldiers. The three non-German deserters were taken prisoner by the French. The German Consul was blamed by France for having exceeded his duties and the French subalterns were accused by Germany of having infringed the inviolability of the consular office as guaranteed by international law. Tedious negotiations were conducted in a conciliatory spirit by both sides and ended in the matter being referred to arbitration; both Powers promised an official apology should the decision establish their guilt. The Kaiser intervened repeatedly in order to hasten matters and was invariably conciliatory. Since learning in greater detail of the conduct of his Government during the crisis of 1905, he had evidently the feeling that it was due to France to make amends somewhat, and he wished to do so honestly and chivalrously. He went even further. As the despatches from our representative in Morocco showed that it was impossible to check the French advances without resorting to force, he declared that our Morocco policy hitherto had proved a failure, and ordered that, if practicable, we should withdraw with dignity and come to an understanding with France as quickly as possible, in spite of the incident in Casablanca.[1] He was confirmed in this attitude by the Bosnian crisis. "In view of these circumstances," he wrote to Bülow, "this wretched Morocco affair must be brought to a conclusion quickly and finally. There is nothing to be made of it. Let it be French! So let us get out of the matter with dignity and let us be done with this friction with France, now that great questions are at issue."[2]

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[1] Circular letter, August 31st. Despatch to Wangenheim, September 2nd.

[2] Wangenheim, September 7th and 11th.

Bülow, however, was not yet prepared to abandon the old Morocco policy entirely. He replied that if we wanted an understanding we should not allow the French to think so, otherwise we should never get an equivalent from them. Perhaps we might again revert to the idea of a great general colonial agreement. "If only that were possible!" the Kaiser commented. Did the Imperial Chancellor himself believe it, we may ask, or did he merely wish by this means to protract the negotiations?

This time the Kaiser did not allow himself to be diverted from his intention. France withdrew a portion of her troops from Morocco and met Germany's wishes in the matter of the text of the terms laid down for Mulai Hafid's observance. Thereafter, at the end of October, Herr von Schön informed M. Cambon that the Kaiser desired to have a permanent understanding with regard to Morocco.[3]

In Paris they hesitated, suspecting hidden dangers behind this unexpected friendliness. The continual suspicion of German policy, emanating from St. Petersburg, intensified the indignation roused by the "theory of hostages" with which France had been threatened over and over again.[4] Clemenceau told Prince Radolin he did not want a war of revenge, "which in any circumstances would mean for victors as well as for vanquished the collapse of prosperity and of the development of civilisation, and the ruin of millions of lives." But France's honour would not tolerate any humiliation. If attacked, no sacrifice would deter her, although it was really to the interests of both countries to come to an understanding.[5] Meanwhile the suggested discussions were not rejected. Cambon conducted them in Berlin, and was considerably surprised to find Germany so moderate in her demands. Mulai Hafid was all the more anxious, and in January, 1909, he sent Germany a species of ultimatum inquiring whether or not he could count in future on active support, for otherwise he would have to arrange terms with France.[1]

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[1] Note by Jenisch to a despatch of the Consul, Dr. Vassel, on September 18th.

[2] The Kaiser's comment on a report of Bülow's to him of October 5th, 1908.

[3] Schön's note on the conversation with Cambon, October 28th.

[4] Lancken, July 6th, 1908, on a conversation with Tardieu.

[5] Prince Radolin, December 28th, 1908, and January 9th, 1909.

At the Kaiser's direct and urgent request, Germany now offered to the French to recognise their privileged position in Morocco, provided they again promised to respect the integrity and independence of the Sherifian Empire and the absolute economic equality of all nations. Our diplomatic representatives considered our demands too modest. Prince Radolin was in favour of demanding at least a share in the financial control and a percentage on the products of the State.[2] Meanwhile, however, everything had been settled with Cambon ; on February 7th the French Government gave its consent, and on the 9th the treaty was signed and immediately published.

As the German Ambassador had justly remarked, there was great surprise in Paris at Germany's sudden and unexpected compliance. People wondered what Bülow had in view ; was he possibly trying by means of an appearance of closer relations with France, to lure England into concessions in the matter of the Bagdad railway ? Did he wish to make France feel that the Entente was no longer necessary ? To the anxious enquiries of the Russians, the shrewd Paul Cambon replied : Morocco is only a small side-question ; the reasons for the impossibility of a Franco-German understanding lie deeper down and cannot be removed by documents.[3]

For this easy and unexpected success the French really had to thank the Kaiser, who was anxious to liquidate the old Morocco policy and thought this a favourable time, when Germany was endeavouring jointly with France and England to maintain peace in the East. He was specially urgent for its speedy conclusion as King Edward was expected in Berlin on February 9th, and it was desirable to avoid any appearance that the latter had brought pressure to bear upon Germany.[1] Soon afterwards it was believed in Berlin that the French Government had at a critical juncture counselled peace to St. Petersburg; and the Kaiser wrote, " One can see how wise it was of us to come to an understanding with France on Morocco." [2] London and Vienna evinced lively satisfaction with the treaty, which seemed at least to have diminished the possible causes of friction in one part of the globe. King Edward and his Ministers took back the impression from their visit to Berlin that Germany did not want war and was ready " to serve the cause of peace in the measure of her strength." Grey declared to the Russian Ambassador that it was to be hoped that Germany would now lose her feeling of isolation. There were only two cases in which war was unavoidable—if Germany were really isolated, or if she obtained the hegemony in Europe.[3]

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[1] Rosen, January 17th, 1909.

[2] Prince Radolin, February 5th, 1909.

[3] Count Benckendorff, February 10th, on a conversation with Paul Cambon (Siebert, p. 408

As a matter of fact every effort was made in Berlin to carry out the treaty loyally. The local representatives were instructed to work in peaceful co-operation with the French, the Consul at Fez was forbidden to lend Mulai Hafid further support, no opposition was offered to the new French military expeditions in the summer of 1909, the French were supported against the Spanish demands for an indemnity, and in December Mulai Hafid's offer of a coaling-station was declined and Paris informed of the fact. Pichon, the French Minister, repeatedly acknowledged publicly Germany's loyal conduct, which had a beneficial influence on their mutual relations.[4] Early in 1910 some little differences cropped up but were easily removed.

About the same time Bülow also sought to get into closer touch with England. During the winter they had worked together unitedly and zealously to surmount the Balkan crisis in the interests of peace. Surely in other questions this honourable co-operation ought to be possible. As Metternich still insisted that the naval question was the sole obstacle, Bülow decided to return to it. It was, however, necessary previously to overcome the Kaiser's opposition.

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[1] Comment of the Kaiser on Pourtalès' report of January 24th, 1909. Bülow to the Kaiser, February 7th.

[2] The Kaiser's comment on Bülow's report of February 22nd, 1909.

[3] Siebert, pp. 718-727.

[4] Despatch to Rosen, May 17th. Prince Radolin, November 23rd. Rosen, December 12th. Schön's note, December 14th. Prince Radolin, December 15th and 27th, 1909.

In April Bülow met the Kaiser, on his way to Corfu, at Venice. Here the Kaiser consented in principle to the conclusion of an agreement on naval matters. The German fleet, he declared, was always intended solely for defence ; a conflict with England would be a misfortune, and a competition in armaments he did not wish. But if the Government and the press in England meant to work by means of threats, compromise would be impossible. Otherwise it might be arranged that the relative standard of strength should be maintained as hitherto. In accordance with the Chancellor's proposal, the Kaiser added the further condition that England, at the same time, should be willing to come to a general political agreement.[1]

Shortly after his return home Bülow had a list drawn up, a series of drafts of treaties with England, to which a naval agreement could be added. Among the most important of these was a proposal for a general defensive alliance. Both Powers were to pledge themselves to support one another with all their might against any unprovoked attack. In the event of either of them being involved in war in fulfilment of their pledges to other alliances, the remaining Power was to observe benevolent neutrality. If such an alliance should not prove feasible, we should then be content with an agreement for neutrality, for which also a plan was prepared. Should this too fail, a third possibility was provided for, namely the conclusion of an " Entente," in which the two Powers only promised general friendship and undertook that on their possessions being threatened they would take counsel together as to the measures necessary for safety. Alongside of this political treaty in one of these three forms were contemplated commercial, colonial, and naval agreements, and finally special treaties about the Bagdad railway, for the still unsettled difficulties over foreigners' rights in Egypt and, perhaps, the right of capture at sea. Taken in their entirety these proposals indicated a well-thought-out plan for the permanent settlement of all disputes as the basis of the common political attitude of both States.[1] It was more or less what England had desired in 1898 and 1901; at that time they could not make up their minds in Berlin to state their proposals with any definiteness until England had consented to the inclusion of Austria-Hungary. Now there was no word of that. Only the naval agreement was new. The English might possibly have agreed at least to some very simple formulating of the political Entente, had we made such proposals in August, 1908, instead of rejecting all discussion. But now, after the Kaiser's refusal at Homburg, and after the introduction of the English Budget, would they still be willing to do so?

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[1] Schön to Bülow, April 5th, 1909. Flotow's note on a conversation with the Kaiser, April 17th. Bülow to Metternich, April 20th.

As Metternich was on holiday, Herr von Stumm, Counsellor of Embassy, who was familiar with these proposals, was sent to London to see how the land lay. He called on Hardinge and Sir Edward Grey and had exhaustive conversations with both. He found the former more friendly than the latter. He felt his way very prudently, beginning by alluding to the prevailing distrust of us in England, so that if the English statesmen, as he expected, attributed it to the armaments race, he could then indicate that feeling in Germany was now more favourable towards an understanding on naval matters. In the course of conversation he further indicated that a naval agreement would only be of value if it were followed by a general political *rapprochement.* Here, however, he did not meet with the friendly echo he had expected. Grey especially held that Europe was now divided into two camps and it would be difficult to unite all the Powers in one camp; for the present all that could well be done was to discuss difficulties as they occurred as frankly as possible. Under these circumstances Herr von Stumm did not consider it advisable to disclose the details of his plans for treaties. His impression was that on the whole it would be difficult to induce England to imperil her relations with France and Russia by entering into closer connection with us. Further improvement in our relations could only be expected if we made concessions in naval matters so considerable as really to reassure public opinion in England.[2]

It was now for Bülow to consider whether he could offer so much. He knew it would really rest with Tirpitz. Already in the beginning of April he had again begged the Admiral to indicate what was the furthest limit to which he was willing to go. He pointed out at the same time that the proposals hitherto had been calculated to rouse false ideas of our intentions in England, increasing thereby the danger of war and making an understanding within reasonable time impossible. "In this case I must leave to your Excellency alone the responsibility to His Majesty, the country, and history, should the consequences prove undesirable and grave."[1] As this appeal did not have the desired effect, on June 3rd the Imperial Chancellor invited von Tirpitz, Admiral von Müller, Moltke, the Chief of the General Staff, Schön, the Secretary of State, Count Metternich, the Ambassador in London, and Bethmann-Hollweg, Secretary for the Interior, to a discussion of the question. Tirpitz was quite willing for a discussion, but he was determined not to consent to any agreement which might compel him to alter anything in his armament plans already settled. He thought we might let the English make their offers. Any considerable delay in the rate of production would invalidate the whole naval laws. The Chief of the General Staff supported the Imperial Chancellor. Von Moltke urgently advocated an understanding with England as there was no chance for us of a successful war against the island empire. In any case it was no use ignoring the fact that it might come to war if a naval understanding were attempted and failed. The only thing that Tirpitz was willing to concede was to fix the laying-down of future vessels in the proportion of three to four; and even that was not to be offered by us. Bülow's request for a more detailed statement he declined; it was not yet time for that, but it might be prepared in case England took the first step.

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[1] Undated drafts for all these treaties, beginning of May, 1909.

[2] Report of Stumm on his London visit, May 7th, 1909.

The impression produced on Count Metternich was that Tirpitz by his conduct showed that he agreed to the proportion of 3 : 4 with a mental reservation, as it was not compatible with his constant reiteration of maintaining intact the programme of construction down to 1920, as established by law. It was extremely regrettable that Tirpitz had not given full information as to his plans of expansion before he (Metternich) had been empowered to make the declaration in London that there was no intention of going beyond the limits previously laid down. Such things impugned our good faith. He hoped that he would not be charged with any further communications which roused hopes in England not afterwards fulfilled.[1]

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[1] Bülow to Tirpitz, April 13th, 1909 (written after thorough discussion with Schön).

The discussion proved fruitless; nevertheless a few weeks later Metternich was instructed, if a favourable opportunity occurred, to indicate that we were not disinclined to negotiate on easier terms for a naval agreement, provided the other side refrained from threats. Herr von Schön spoke in similar terms to the English Ambassador.[2] Tirpitz, however, urgently requested the Secretary of State not to make any communication to England to the effect that no further acceleration of our naval plans was intended, as experience had shown that to be useless and to be interpreted as fear on our side.[3] Although the desired understanding had not been realised there was a perceptible decrease of the hostility between Germany and England, and so Germany by no means intended to give up the idea yet.

On the whole the feeling in Berlin was that since the success in the Bosnian question and the Morocco agreement, Germany's position had distinctly improved, and that in the immediate future the prospects were reassuring. Russia showed clear indications of a wish for closer relations which might possibly be due to a desire to restrain Austria from further proceedings in the Balkans, so long as her own armaments were inadequate. Iswolski even drafted a treaty whereby Germany was to bind herself not to regard the *casus fœderis* as having arisen, if Austria ventured beyond her present territorial position and thereby came into conflict with Russia; in return for which he would promise neutrality in the event of an English attack on Germany. The draft was never considered officially, preliminary discussions with the German Ambassador having shown that he had no intention of accepting, as Germany regarded Serbia as lying within the Austrian sphere of influence.[4] These efforts were undoubtedly symptoms of Russia's need for peace and support. At a meeting of the Sovereigns in Finland the Czar promised during his impending visits to France and England to say and do nothing that could be prejudicial to Germany, and Herr von Schön assured Iswolski that we would not encourage the Austrians in any further enterprises in the Balkans.[1]

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[1] Schön's record of the proceedings at the conference of June 3rd: Admiral von Müller's record (Tirpitz, p. 157, with slight variations). Metternich's comments on the above, June 4th and 29th.

[2] Bülow to Metternich, June 23rd. Schön's note, June 23rd.

[3] Tirpitz to Schön, June 24th.

[4] Russian plan of May 17th, 1909, in *Documents from the Russian Secret Archives*, p. 21. Pourtalès, May 22nd, on a conversation with Tcharykoff. Bülow to Pourtalès, May 25th. Pourtalès, June 2nd, 3rd, 11th. Tschirschky, June 18th.

Hence in Berlin they came to the conclusion that the Entente had been profoundly shaken, and they were hoping for improved relations with England. The oppressive feeling of being ringed round by enemies disappeared and Bülow breathed freely again. For twenty years past we had not been so much respected and feared in the world as now, he remarked in the discussion on June 3rd referred to above.

This relief from tension in foreign affairs probably led the Kaiser to conclude that a change in the person of the Imperial Chancellor would be relatively unimportant. Since the *Daily Telegraph* episode he had determined to get rid of Prince Bülow at the first possible moment. When, therefore, during the debates on finance reform, the Chancellor lost the majority in Parliament on which he had hitherto been able to rely, and thereupon tendered his resignation, it was accepted (14th May, 1909).

For more than a decade Prince Bülow had guided German policy, and he had steered the empire into the ominous isolation which was the result of the two Ententes. He was always, first and foremost, the accomplished man of the world, who liked to treat important matters in an off-hand fashion. He lacked the deep earnestness and the complete and passionate devotion to the interests of his country and his nation which are indispensable attributes of a great statesman. Skilful in negotiating with foreign diplomatists and party leaders at home, dexterous in his management of the Kaiser, whose vanity he flattered while withholding from him important matters where he feared an unwelcome decision, he had long been able to retain a leading position. But he lacked a sense of the great interdependence of the nations with whom our fate also was bound up, and he had no grasp of the broad lines of the world's history.

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[1] Circular letter, June 18th. Schön to the Foreign Office, June 19th. Pourtalès, 26th June.

Under Holstein's influence he had hesitated about concluding an alliance with England and had rejected an understanding with France, while by his double-dealing and self-willed policy in Morocco he had drawn the two Western Powers closer together. He had encouraged the Kaiser in his Utopian continental policy and he had ultimately consented to the pernicious doctrine of the unconditional support of Austria in her Eastern policy; and when his doubts of the Kaiser's naval policy (inspired by Tirpitz) increased, he had not acted with any vigour. The policy of missing opportunities, the responsibility for which rests with him, brought Germany into a position the difficulty of which he occasionally experienced but did not realise in its full extent. Outwardly he was leaving the empire strong and secure, in reality, however, in an extremely critical position, demanding the utmost prudence, skill and energy.

His successor was Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, who had made his mark in the civil service and had risen to be Secretary of State for the Interior. He was a man of good sense and honest purpose, with a strong sense of duty, but obstinate and sometimes pedantic in his zeal. Moreover, he lacked diplomatic experience, and what was worse, the essential endowments of a statesman, the firmness of purpose and strength of resolve indispensable in dealing with a public opinion which had grown self-conscious and clamorous in the course of years, and with a Sovereign who while extremely self-conscious was inwardly altogether unstable.

In his *Memoirs* Herr von Bethmann describes the situation when he took over the leadership. Germany found herself faced by the three Entente Powers who were endeavouring to win over Italy. England held firm by the Entente, although she must have known the anti-German character of French and Russian policy; possibly she may have hoped to direct these tendencies towards the needs of her own policy and sought to keep them in check. How much of this only became clear to him through the subsequent course of events and how much he already knew may be left undetermined. He certainly took a more sceptical view of the situation than his predecessor, and regarded it as his duty to seek a *rapprochement* with England in all seriousness, and to end Germany's dangerous dependence on Austria's incalculable and aimless Eastern policy.

New negotiations for an understanding were begun with London in an unofficial way, through Ballin and Sir Ernest Cassel, as on a previous occasion. On the English side it was suggested that there should be a confidential discussion by naval experts from both sides, which might possibly have led to some practical result.[1] But Bethmann-Hollweg preferred to handle the matter at once as a piece of formal negotiation. On August 13th, he recommended to the Kaiser an official exchange of opinions. For the present he was prepared to give up the idea of special treaties on the colonies and the Bagdad railway, even of an alliance and the promise of neutrality ; only a naval understanding was to be offered, on condition that England gave her national policy a bias favourable to Germany and guaranteed that her treaties with other States had no secret animus against Germany. He succeeded in gaining Tirpitz's consent to a proposal according to which the building of new warships in Germany in 1910 was to be reduced from four to three, in 1911 from four to two, provided England pledged herself to build only four in 1910, only three in 1911, and from 1912 onwards, Germany two and England three of these great vessels yearly. From 1910 till 1914 Germany would then build eleven great battleships instead of fourteen, and England sixteen, which gave a proportion of 1 : 1·45. Shortly afterwards Tirpitz proposed another formula according to which England was to build, from 1910 to 1913, three ships yearly (including those built by her colonies), and Germany two ships, which gave a proportion of 3 : 2 for new construction. After 1914 Germany was to revert to the rate of three ships yearly.[2]

In contrast to his previous attitude the Kaiser supported this proposal heartily and hopefully. England, he declared, was bound to accept it, and it would ensure a great moral strengthening of our position in the Concert of Europe.

The English Ambassador was duly informed and at the same time requested to co-operate in the strictest secrecy in bringing the negotiations to their conclusion. Sir Edward Grey welcomed the proposal and thought it should not be difficult to find a political formula compatible with the existing treaties.[1] Meanwhile it soon proved that the willing spirit on the part of our naval staff was not so great as Bethmann had supposed. The fact that Tirpitz had demanded that the shipbuilding for the British dominions should be included in the English total was in itself sufficient to increase the difficulties. The crux of the matter was still the rigid adherence to the conditions laid down in the naval laws of 1907. How the decrease in our building of new ships, which is what concerned England, could be reconciled with these conditions, is still unexplained. The real intentions and thoughts of the Admiral even in his most recent publications are not yet defined with complete clearness. It is possible he was only acquiescing in the Imperial Chancellor's wishes in order to escape the odium of hindering the political understanding with England. It is very strange that on his own admission he was doubtful about telling the Foreign Office frankly how far he was prepared to go in making concessions, because he was afraid they would at once tell the English, instead of offering less and letting themselves be pushed during the negotiations to the limits envisaged. His wrath was particularly fierce against Count Metternich, whom he regarded as the principal opponent of a strong German navy and for whose removal from London he was even then agitating.[2]

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[1] *Vide* Huldermann, ***Ballin***, p. 216.

[2] Tirpitz to Bethmann, September 1st (Tirpitz, p. 165). Later (November 4th) Tirpitz again changed his plan and proposed that in 1910 England should build four, Germany three ships ; from 1911 to 1914 England three and Germany two, yearly, so that the increase from 1910 till 1914 would be for England sixteen ships, for Germany eleven (Tirpitz, p. 169).

The interview with English statesmen did not get much beyond general terms, as Bethmann would not make definite proposals either for the reductions in naval construction or for a political agreement until England had at least shown her willingness to conclude a political agreement implying definite services in return for concessions in naval matters. For this latter event Berlin was still thinking out new and complicated formulae covering every conceivable emergency. Bethmann was quite clear that no cunningly devised treaty-made conditions could ensure safety in the event of danger, that everything depended on the strength of national opinion in both countries. Evidently, however, he felt that he could not satisfy his conscience without at least providing all possible guarantees on paper, and that he could not justify the naval reductions to popular opinion without such precautions.

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[1] Bethmann's note on his conversation with Goschen, August 15th. Metternich, September 1st. Goschen's communication, September 2nd.

[2] Tirpitz to Bethmann, September 3rd. Bethmann to Tirpitz, September 16th. Cf. Tirpitz, p. 169; also *ibid.* 119.

The English on their part expressed their satisfaction at Germany's willingness to restrict naval armaments, but requested fuller information, without which they were unable to form a conclusion or consent to a political understanding. Their interest declined considerably when they learned that there was to be little or no change in the plans for construction down to 1917, already passed by law. Also they showed little inclination for a political treaty dealing with mere general assurances to the effect that the one side would not attack the other without reason nor cause such attack to be made. They again stated that the pledges made in previous alliances must be respected; they could not make more promises to Germany than to France and Russia, with which Powers they had treaties relating only to points previously under dispute, not to the general political situation. Besides, public opinion would not approve a political understanding without a naval agreement. It is probable that Sir Edward Grey was on the whole unfavourable to a binding treaty with Germany, and was resolved, if it did eventuate, to make it as non-committal as possible. The negotiations hung fire repeatedly when the English Ministers were absorbed by the acuteness of the constitutional struggles; but they were always resumed at Germany's request though without leading to any result.[1] The only practical proposal came from England. It was in reference to the plan for instituting periodical reports by the naval attachés on both sides as to the progress of new vessels under construction, and the inspection of the shipyards in both countries, in order to remove the suspicion of the English that Germany was building more ships than was officially admitted. We gave our consent to this condition slowly and unwillingly.

As regards Austria, Bethmann certainly promised that we would not again voluntarily allow ourselves to share the responsibility of her far-reaching activities; but whether he would really be able to prevent them, only time could show.

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[1] Bethmann's note on a conversation with Goschen, October 14th, 1909 (in Jäckh, *Kiderlen-Wachter*, 2. 59). Bethmann to Metternich, October 27th. Metternich to Bethmann, October 28th. Plan for an agreement for neutrality and German note, October 28th. Bethmann and Schön's conversation with Goschen, November 4th (*op. cit.* 2. 69). Bethmann to Metternich, November 10th and 15th. Metternich, December 30th. English memorandum, January 15th, 1910. Bethmann to Metternich, February 1st. Metternich, February 3rd, 4th, 10th. Kühlmann, March 31st.

The situation in the East was growing constantly more dangerous, because Russia was openly endeavouring to form all the Balkan States into a solid bloc under her leadership so as to protect them against any further dark plans of Aehrenthal's. The irreconcilable claims of Serbia and Bulgaria to the larger part of Macedonia formed a serious stumbling-block. In order to facilitate matters, Russia was pursuing the extremely dangerous expedient, in the interests of peace, of allowing Serbia to hope for the future dissolution of the Danube Monarchy. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dalmatia and perhaps even more, would fall to her lot and she could therefore afford to leave Bulgaria the lion's share of Macedonia. As a matter of fact this was the only way of settling the conflicting interests of Serbia and Bulgaria, and, as we see, it would be at Austria's expense. Bulgaria at first was very coy. King Ferdinand evidently did not believe in an early collapse of the Danube Monarchy, and knew that he would have Serbia as his enemy unless she could be satisfied at Austria's expense. In August, 1909, there was a rumour in St. Petersburg that Bulgaria was seeking closer touch with Austria, which induced the Czar to send a sharp warning to Sofia.[1] King Ferdinand, however, was not actually thinking of such a thing, but merely wished to keep himself entirely free: in St. Petersburg they were not prepared to grant this. Owing to her intervention during the crisis of 1908, Russia had obtained a strong influence in Bulgaria, and as the needy Coburger was personally dependent upon occasional advances from the Czar's treasury, he was obliged in December, 1909, to sign a military convention with Russia which was to be kept strictly secret. He had to bind himself to mobilise immediately his entire army at the Czar's request, in any conflict between Russia and Germany, Austria, Roumania, or Turkey, irrespective of which party was the aggressor; and under the Russian supreme command it was then to co-operate on a previously arranged plan. On the other hand, Russia only promised to help Bulgaria provided the latter were attacked without provocation on her part. In the fifth article it was expressly stated that the ideals of the Slav peoples in the Balkan Peninsula could only be realised once the struggle with Germany and Austria had ended in Russia's favour.[1]

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[1] Siebert, p. 142.

This *rapprochement* between St. Petersburg and Sofia was followed with great anxiety in Bucharest, for there they feared that in the partitioning of Turkish territory they might find themselves left out altogether. King Charles had long made up his mind, in the event of Bulgaria receiving a considerable increase, to claim compensation at her expense, if possible, up to a line from Silistria to Varna. But he was uncertain whether to make this claim immediately on the outbreak of war or to wait till it had run its course. Germany and Austria, who were allied with Roumania, but hoped at the critical juncture to bring Bulgaria also over to their side, viewed these plans of King Charles with great disfavour and advised him in the event of war in the Balkans not to take part in it, but to lay his request for compensation later on before a congress of the European Powers. But as Roumania felt that she was likely in that case to get nothing or very little, she was dissatisfied with the attitude of her allies, all the more so as Austria had proffered her advice in very curt language. In St. Petersburg they promptly dangled before Roumania the bait of future aggrandisement at Austria-Hungary's expense, and these allurements gradually found acceptance with a large number of Roumanian politicians. The Kaiser, who had always considered Bulgaria's allegiance uncertain, had advised Austria as far back as November, 1909, to create a powerful counterpoise to the development of a Balkan league, engineered by Russia, by making firm agreements with Turkey and Roumania.[2]

Italy's interests in the Balkan Peninsula had also to be considered. Russia's policy aimed at winning over Italy to herself and the Balkan States so as to isolate Austria there completely. The Czar's visit from October 23rd to 25th, 1909, to King Victor Emmanuel at Racconigi served to further this aim.[3] Even the method of procedure was characteristic; the Czar made a wide detour to avoid touching Austrian territory. In Berlin and Vienna the visit was regarded with some anxiety. Bethmann and Aehrenthal had arranged to bind the Italian Government by a firm agreement with Austria before the intended meeting, and by the middle of October the text had been drafted. It provided that Italy should be consulted previously and should be given compensation in the event of Austria being compelled by events to occupy, either temporarily or permanently, the Sanjak of Novibazar. Furthermore, the two Powers were to bind themselves not to make terms with a third party on Balkan questions unless the other participated on the footing of absolute equality. Finally each member was to communicate with the other if from a third direction proposals reached him at variance with the principle of non-intervention, or which aimed at an alteration in the existing situation in the Balkans or on the coast and islands of the Turkish Empire, or in the Adriatic and Aegean Seas. This agreement was to remain in force so long as the Triple Alliance existed. By her request for the alteration of a few words in the text, Austria delayed the ratification so long that there was not time to complete it before the meeting at Racconigi took place.[1]

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[1] Boghitchetvitch, p. 115. Documents from the Russian secret archives, f. 27.

[2] Kiderlen, August 23rd, October 24th and 30th. Bethmann's report, November 8th, with the Kaiser's comments.

[3] Cf. official documents in Siebert, pp. 143 f., 121, 459, 702. Also Tschirschky, October 30th. Bethmann's report, November 8th. Bethmann's note on his conversation with the Italian Ambassador, December 14th.

Here the Sovereigns of Russia and Italy came to the following decision: everything was to be done to maintain the *status quo* in the Balkans; if this proved impossible, then both Powers were to encourage the development of the Balkan States on the principle of nationality to the exclusion of all foreign sovereignty. The intention of this arrangement was that in the event of Turkey being partitioned, only the Balkan States should receive shares, neither Austria nor Italy. Notice of this was sent by St. Petersburg to London and Paris and also to the Balkan States. The Italian Ambassador in Berlin explicitly confirmed this statement. It was furthermore promised that neither of the two Powers was to undertake new treaty obligations in respect of European questions without knowledge of the other. Finally Italy consented to a benevolent attitude towards Russia's designs in the Straits question and Russia towards Italy's intentions in Tripoli and the Cyrenaica.[2]

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[1] Tschirschky, October 18th and 30th.

[2] Cf. the text of the treaty as communicated later by Russia to France in Stieve's *Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, ii. 363.

These settlements were certainly not in keeping with the spirit of the treaty that was almost concluded with Austria, in which Italy, on certain conditions, agreed to the transfer of the Sanjak to Austria, which, according to the arrangements come to at Racconigi, was inadmissible. When notice of this decision was sent him from Rome, Aehrenthal replied that he considered these discussions merely an interchange of opinions without any binding power, as in view of the impossibility of maintaining the *status quo*, apart from Albania, binding agreements had hitherto not been concluded. He wanted thereby, as he told the German Ambassador, to have a free hand; he did not wish to break the link with Italy, but he had the feeling that the other side was not dealing fairly.[1] In spite of all, the Austro-Italian treaty, which had been previously agreed upon, was finally signed on November 30th.[2] Russia invited England and France to join in the agreements signed at Racconigi, and this they did. A Russian proposal to summon also Germany and Austria, Hardinge rejected as "untimely and dangerous." On the other hand the Russian Ambassador in Berlin showed unmistakably that Russia considered European Turkey an "intolerable anomaly," and desired to unite the Balkan States under her own leadership.[3] In this way the meeting at Racconigi created a certain understanding between the Entente Powers as to the future of European Turkey. It was highly significant, because it contained the first united move of the Entente Powers in the matter of the Near East, and it was also a further step on Italy's part away from the Triple Alliance and towards the Entente. Certainly the agreements concluded at Racconigi, if strictly carried out, would also prevent Russia from laying hands on Constantinople.

The winter passed tranquilly. Early in 1910, on Austria's suggestion, normal diplomatic intercourse was resumed between Vienna and St. Petersburg. It had been suspended since the Bosnian crisis, although there had been no official breach. Aehrenthal wished, at the same time, to renew the old agreements of 1897 to 1903. The Russian Ambassador in Paris, Nelidoff, urgently advised this course in order to give the Balkan States time to establish their mutual relations and to enable Russia herself "to develop her military strength in all security and to prepare for events which could not be avoided." Iswolski was undoubtedly of the same opinion. As Serbia showed great anxiety at this intercourse, fearing lest she might be sacrificed, he assured her that nothing would be arranged that was prejudicial to her. He declined to return absolutely to the previous treaties, but suggested in Vienna that they should agree to the following three principles: 1. The maintenance of the *status quo* in the Balkans as long as possible. 2. Equality of rights of all nationalities under Turkish rule. 3. The independence, consolidation, and peaceful development of the lesser Balkan States. No attempt was made to define Russia's attitude in the event of it proving impossible to maintain the *status quo.* Aehrenthal agreed to this, but expressed the wish that in the event of war breaking out among the Balkan States there should be an interchange of views before either of the Great Powers took definite action. He did not wish this agreement to be communicated to all the Great Powers, as Iswolski proposed. Eventually an official statement was issued merely to the effect that a satisfactory understanding on the Balkan question had been reached by the two Great Powers. Iswolski, however, on his part, informed the Great Powers of the principles of the agreement.[1] Aehrenthal told the German Imperial Chancellor that he had been unwilling to consent to a written declaration as he wanted to keep a free hand for the future. He had the feeling that Iswolski wanted to go behind him, his real intention being to isolate Germany completely by cutting her off from Austria.[2] In Berlin it was believed that Austria would not agree to any future dismemberment of Turkey among the Balkan States, as that solution of the problem could only be effected at her expense. It was thought that if such a collapse took place, in spite of all her denials, Austria would claim a share and seek to extend her territory towards the Sanjak. Again they begged Austria, though in vain, to get into closer touch with Italy in this matter, and when Aehrenthal came to Berlin in October, 1910, they sought to influence him towards this end.[3] Both in Vienna and Berlin they rejected the ideas advocated in General Kuropatkin's *Russia for the Russians*, in which Russia and Austria were advised to come to an agreement as to the future partitioning of Turkey, for they hoped that Turkey would be able to maintain her existence for a long time yet, and that therefore the question would not become acute.[1] On this occasion the German Ambassador in Vienna, Herr von Tschirschky, for the first time expressed ideas on Germany's Eastern policy which differed fundamentally from the point of view laid down by Bülow. He wrote, " Germany is not a Balkan Power. During the past year, for reasons of state, we have thrown the full weight of our political influence into the balance for Austria's interests. In my opinion we should be well advised to prevent as far as possible any repetition of this proceeding. We must keep a free hand in the future and let ourselves be as little as possible involved in Balkan questions, so that at the psychological moment we may be free to choose our position and to get the utmost advantage from it." [2]

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[1] Tschirschky, October 30th.

[2] Given in Pribram, i. 99.

[3] Bethmann's report, November 8th.

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[1] Siebert, pp. 116-133.

[2] Brockdorff-Rantzau, March 15th.

[3] Schön's note, February 18th, 1910. Circular letter from the Foreign Office, February 27th.

The aim of Germany and Austria was always to maintain and strengthen Turkey, whereas Russia watched suspiciously every attempt at increasing the Turkish fleet in the Black Sea or at improving Turkish finances. Thus the French were warned against granting Turkey a loan because she would use it to strengthen her Caucasian frontier, which would oblige Russia to transfer troops from the German to the Caucasian frontiers. The French then sought to attach to the loan the condition that Turkey would not in future draw any military instructors or any further munitions from Germany, nor would the Bagdad Railway Company receive any further concessions. The Turkish Ministry declared such conditions incompatible with the independence of Turkey and rightly attributed them to Russian influence. Turkey received the necessary loan in November, 1910, from a syndicate of German and Austrian banks.[3]

All this proves abundantly that Russia's policy aimed at preventing any expansion of Austria's influence in the Balkan Peninsula, at guarding against any strengthening of Turkey, at preparing the way for gradually partitioning her territory among the Balkan States; those among them which did not receive adequate treatment were promised compensation at Austria-Hungary's expense.

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[1] Hintze, March 24th. Count Pourtalès, April 2nd. Stumm's memorandum, April 16th.

[2] Tschirschky, May 1st.

[3] Siebert, 293-302.

While the situation in the East was constantly becoming more acute, and little progress was being made with the Anglo-German *rapprochement*, King Edward VII. died (May 7th, 1910). It had sometimes been thought that with him the element of unrest would disappear from European politics. Undoubtedly in the last years especially, wherever he went, he had sown distrust of Germany; he had advised the Czar to strengthen his army; he had urgently represented to the King of Italy his precarious position in the event of an Anglo-German war, and had repeatedly endeavoured to turn the aged Emperor Francis Joseph away from Germany, though without success. As a matter of fact his death had very little influence on the further course of events. His son and successor, George V., at once informed the Russian Ambassador that he would do his utmost to strengthen the ties between the two countries.[1] There was no change in the leaders of English policy. Grey, Asquith, and Haldane continued to dominate the foreign policy, Lloyd George especially the home policy. The fact that the Kaiser at once hurried across to the interment of his uncle was gratefully acknowleged in England, and he himself gathered the impression from the attitude of the populace that his popularity had increased. As usual when he was in London, he felt deeply conscious of the attraction of this country, which he always regarded as a sort of second homeland, and ardently desirous to establish closer political relations with it.[2] But the conditions had not become any more favourable for such an undertaking.

In Germany, too, just at this time there was an important change in one of the official posts. In June, 1910, Freiherr von Schön, Secretary of State to the Foreign Office in Germany, left his post and went to Paris as Ambassador. He was an industrious and conscientious official without any distinguishing characteristics, and had not exercised any great influence either on

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[1] Siebert, 781.

[2] Kaiser's telegram to Bethmann from London on May 22nd and 23rd. Metternich to Bethmann, May 24th.

Bülow or on Bethmann-Hollweg. He was succeeded by Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter, who was of a Würtemberg family with tradition of official service and had served his diplomatic apprenticeship under Bismarck and Holstein. He was fifty-eight, and was only now reaching a leading position although he had earlier been regarded as one of the ablest juniors in the Foreign Office. The delay in his promotion was due to his relations with the Kaiser, to whose circle of intimate friends he had at one time belonged and whom he had regularly accompanied in his yearly northern cruises. But in the autumn of 1897 he suddenly fell into disfavour. Some of his blunt but witty comments on the Imperial Round Table had reached his master's ears. He was sent as Ambassador to Bucharest and left to languish there for ten years. At last Bülow, on Holstein's urgent advice, made him acting Secretary of State—from November, 1908, to May, 1909. He officiated during that time at the conclusion of the Morocco treaty of 1909, and drew up the decisive instructions for St. Petersburg in March of that year which led to Russia's withdrawal. But Bülow was evidently unable to persuade the Kaiser to make the appointment permanent. Bethmann-Hollweg, who was urgently requiring a capable coadjutor with diplomatic experience, now recalled him and compelled the reluctant Kaiser to give his consent.

Kiderlen-Wächter is one of the most discussed personalities among the German statesmen of the last decades. There are still many who consider him the ablest politician we possessed and the last in whom there still gleamed a spark of Bismarck's spirit. But the facts do not corroborate this verdict. He had certainly a shrewd brain and he excelled the majority of his colleagues in will-power and capacity for work. But there was a strain of reckless brutality and truculence in his nature which, in a precarious situation demanding above all things prudence and tact, might prove ominous. His treatment of Russia in March, 1909, is a case in point.[1]

Soon afterwards, in the end of September, Iswolski retired from the Foreign Office in St. Petersburg. Since the unfortunate termination of the Bosnian crisis his position had been undermined.

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[1] *Vide* Jäckh, *Kiderlen-Wächter der Mensch und Staatsmann*, Stuttgart, 1924.

He had all along been in favour of association with England, and since 1908 his personal antipathy to Aehrenthal had proved a disturbing factor in European politics. He now went to Paris as Ambassador and was replaced by his assistant, Sazonoff, who was looked upon as friendly to Germany. He was Stolypin's son-in-law and belonged to the reactionary party, who were less partial than the Liberals to the Western Powers;[1] but it was very doubtful if he would really forsake his predecessor's policy in foreign affairs. And Iswolski by coming to Paris retained a far-reaching and fateful influence on Russia's national policy.

But while things outwardly appeared quiet, the diplomatic turmoil continued unabated behind the scenes. For a time the Persian question looked as if it would lead to serious developments. In the spring of 1909 the Russians had considered it necessary to occupy Tabriz, and to thrust their detachments even along the route to Teheran. They were straining every nerve to bring the Persian Government under their influence. In London this proceeding on the part of an ally was viewed with great anxiety. There was the danger of a Persian Government controlled by Russia making its influence felt in Russia's favour in the neutral zone of middle Persia and in the English sphere of influence in southern Persia. As they were resolved not to tolerate that in any case, they would be forced to dismember Persia, which they wished to avoid doing out of consideration for public opinion at home and in the outside world. Russia was therefore cautioned against this self-willed procedure, and when the chance occurred, was made to feel that the existence of the Entente, which in fact rested partly on the agreements made with regard to Persia, might be seriously imperilled if they differed over the Persian question. Count Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador in London, anxiously advised extreme prudence, convinced that the gain of a few advantages in Persia was not to be compared with the enormous value of the Entente with England. Sir Edward Grey had told him that he himself would not alter the character of his policy, but that he might perhaps be defeated, and he had no idea what his successor would do.

The difficulties were ultimately removed by large concessions on England's side. But new dangers were already in sight owing to the fall of the old Shah, who had been completely won over by Russia, and to the introduction of constitutional government in Teheran. For Parliament had become here, as in Turkey, the voice of popular opinion, which was absolutely hostile to foreign interference in the affairs of its own country. Persia was undoubtedly the weakest link in the Entente chain. However, as soon as Germany sought to protect her economic interests by dealing directly with the Shah, the two members of the treaty of 1907 immediately agreed that on no terms would they suffer the intervention of a third party, namely Germany. It was said that Germany would want to do here as she had done to France in Morocco. As a matter of fact the circumstances were not dissimilar, except that Germany, warned by her unfortunate experience at Algeciras, and being now not in nearly so favourable a position politically as then, never seriously intended to allow things here to come to a conflict with Russia and England.

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[1] Jenisch to Bethmann, October 13th.

In close relation to the Persian question was that of the continuation of the Bagdad Railway. It had been at a standstill for nearly four years owing to difficulties raised by the Entente Powers. On June 2nd, 1908, the continuation as far as Tell Helif was sanctioned by Turkey; in the following year the work was put in hand. In November, 1909, the Sultan sanctioned the branch line from the Cilician Gulf to the interior, and also the lines in connection built by the Bagdad Railway Company. England, who was principally concerned to get control of the Mesopotamian final section, was already virtually master of the Sultan of Koweit's territory, and had the monopoly for the shipping on the Euphrates and the Tigris handed over to an English company. Herr von Gwinner, the Director of the German Bank, endeavoured repeatedly through the medium of Sir Ernest Cassel to get into direct touch with English financial circles, and through their co-operation to remove the difficulties from the construction of the last section of the line. Germany was prepared to allot to English capital up to 60 per cent. of the shares for this section, provided England guaranteed that she would no longer hinder the completion of the line as far as Bagdad by German capital. English financial circles were not unwilling to agree to such an arrangement; but Government consent could not be obtained, and all these efforts failed because the Entente Powers had arranged among themselves that none of them would come to an understanding as to the Bagdad Railway without previously notifying the others. That had already been clearly shown during the discussion at Windsor in 1907. The temptation for the English was so great that they told Russia plainly they would eventually come to terms, as the construction of the railway was an economic necessity and could not be permanently held up. Russia was well aware of this, but wanted to get compensations in return for her consent. In order to hold Germany back, and if possible induce her to make higher offers, matters were represented to the Young Turk Government in Constantinople in such a light as to imply that the conclusion of such an agreement involved the break up of Turkey into economic spheres of interest which might easily become the prelude to complete territorial dissolution. And so the matter kept dragging on. In 1910 France endeavoured to get a concession for a railway from Syria to Bagdad which would have competed with the German section, while England, although aware of the treaties between Turkey and the German company, agitated for a concession for an English company for the stretch from Bagdad to the Persian Gulf. It was at this time that France endeavoured, as already stated, to attach to the loan requested by Turkey political conditions which resulted in the breaking off the negotiations and the placing of the loan with an Austro-German syndicate. The relations between Germany and Russia, in spite of repeated meetings of their Sovereigns and the official interchange of sentiments, had not improved. Consequently, von Hintze, in his reports, held to the view that Russia would attack us as soon as her armaments were ready, a view which the Kaiser shared. Count Pourtalès inclined to the belief that no Russian statesman had either the courage or the ability for such hazardous and far-reaching plans, and that the danger lay more in incalculable impulses which at critical moments might harden into facts, than in well-thought-out hostile plans.[1] Bethmann also felt that we ought " not to let ourselves be deceived as to Russia's subservience to the Triple Entente with its anti-German bias." In spite of all, he wished outwardly to maintain good relations with Russia, as Austria would wrest the control of the Triple Alliance for herself as soon as she thought we were permanently estranged from Russia ;[1] and England would prove more compliant if she believed our relations with Russia were good.

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[1] Pourtalès, August 12th, 22nd, 23rd, 26th. Hintze, August 19th. Kaiser to Bethmann, August 26th.

Sazonoff also at first emphasised his desire for good fellowship with Germany and confidential intercourse between the two Sovereigns. The Kaiser did not expect much from that, but he did not reject the Russian overtures. The Czar was invited to Potsdam, and visited the Kaiser there on November 4th and 5th, 1910.[2] Sazonoff and Bethmann discussed the Balkan situation. The Chancellor stated emphatically that if Austria pursued any plans of expansion, which he was convinced would not happen, "we were neither bound nor willing to come to her assistance." Sazonoff thanked him for this declaration, which was highly important for Russia's policy. On his side he promised that "in all her efforts to come to an understanding with England, Russia would never, through him, let herself be drawn by England into hostile combinations directed against Germany." In the Near East Sazonoff favoured the maintenance of Turkey, the dissolution of which would be a menace to peace. Bethmann recognised Russia's exceptional political situation in Northern Persia, in return for an assurance of complete equality of rights for German trade, and renounced the gaining of railway concessions. Sazonoff then promised not to obstruct the progress of the Bagdad Railway any longer ; the building of the branch line to Teheran on Persian territory was reserved for Russia ; but should the completion of this line before a given date not be found possible, Germany was to take over this line also. Russia evidently made this concession because the news from London led her to fear that an Anglo-German agreement on the Bagdad Railway might be arranged in spite of Russia's opposition.

On the Kaiser's return visit to the Czar in Wolfsgarten, on November 11th, the Czar sought to produce the impression that his main interests were still centred in the Far East. He talked of the development of the Siberian and the Amur railways by double track lines and of the necessity of a new struggle with Japan. The Kaiser seems to have believed in this, and formed the impression that Iswolski had been relieved of his post largely because he had opposed this policy.[1]

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[1] Bethmann's reports, January 2nd and September 15th, 1910.

[2] Memorandum for this interview, October 30th. Notes, November 6th and 14th.

It is doubtful how far the Czar and Sazonoff were sincere in making these statements. The Czar possibly was, but hardly Sazonoff, for he sent definite word to London that the understanding regarding the railways would only take effect if Germany gained both France and England's consent, which he never mentioned in Potsdam.[2] He agitated in Berlin for a written statement of the agreements concluded, really in order to obtain an official confirmation of Bethmann's declaration concerning Austrian policy, but immediately gave way when Germany then desired that the Russian assurance in respect of England should be included. He thought Russia was thereby undertaking an obligation of much greater extent than Germany and sought to modify his words. Kiderlen instructed Count Pourtalès not to consent to any such modification. "The declaration," he wrote, "must be so worded that on the day on which it comes to the knowledge of England, Russia is compromised." Just because they were conscious at St. Petersburg of this double purpose on Germany's part, they would not commit themselves. Sazonoff declared that on closer reflection the German assurance was of little importance. Austria herself had frequently declared that she did not intend to pursue an aggressive policy and that she was not strong enough to do so. Besides, written statements were unnecessary, as the verbal assurances of both Sovereigns were more valuable than an exchange of notes. Kiderlen wrote to the Ambassador that the reference to the Czar's word was not a bad stroke on Sazonoff's part. "It has made a great impression on the Imperial Chancellor, less on me." All the same it was necessary to keep up the appearance of being satisfied with that.[3] These general promises were not included in the written agreement regarding North Persia and the Bagdad railway, which was concluded after prolonged negotiations on the lines of the Potsdam conferences, and was only signed in August, 1911.

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[1] Bethmann's note, November 18th.

[2] Siebert, 366.

[3] Pourtalès, November 10th. Note to Pourtalès, November 15th. Pourtalès to Kiderlen, December 2nd. Kiderlen to Pourtalès, December 4th. Pourtalès, December 12th and 14th. Note to Pourtalès, December 19th. Kiderlen to Pourtalès, December 20th.

Bethmann sought to obtain some compensation for the lack of written formulae by declaring in the Reichstag on December 10th, 1910 (having previously obtained Sazonoff's consent), that "both Governments declined to enter upon combinations of any kind capable of developing an aggressive bias towards the other party." The Kaiser protested that such a comprehensive statement, possibly prejudicial to the Triple Alliance, had never been uttered within his memory; but he let himself be reassured. He made use of the occasion, however, to impress upon the Imperial Chancellor that he himself guided foreign policy. "In future," he commanded, "notification is to be given to me beforehand of the contents of any proposed declaration and as to the steps to be taken with foreign governments."[1] He intended to keep the new Chancellor from the very outset in stricter dependence on himself than his predecessor had been.

It is impossible to state with certainty whether this overture from Russia was merely a final earnest attempt to resume the old relations with Germany or merely a tactical manœuvre to mark time. It is quite possible that Stolypin, who required a further long spell of peace to carry through his great agrarian reforms, was sincerely desirous to re-establish good relations with Germany. Outwardly these conferences were a further symptom of an easier situation. From London and Paris came reproaches against the Russians for being too accommodating towards the Germans.

In order to improve matters, in the autumn of 1910 Bethmann resumed negotiations with England for a naval and a political agreement. After the General Election in the summer Admiral Fisher, a persistent advocate of a preventive war with Germany, had resigned his post as First Sea Lord and had been succeeded by the more peaceable Admiral Wilson. On August 11th, by way of resuming the negotiations after a break of several months, England had sent Berlin a memorandum stating that an alteration in the speed of German naval construction without an alteration in the plans sanctioned by law was not of much consequence.

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[1] Bethmann's report, December 11th, with marginal comments by the Kaiser.

An agreement was very difficult, but a German declaration to the effect that no fresh increases would be decided upon was highly desirable, accompanied by the introduction of the system of an exchange of news by naval attachés, which would carry weight with public opinion in England. The Kaiser considered that England in that case must at least bind herself down to a definite programme of construction. Also we must ask to be included in England's Ententes with France and Russia, the contents of which should be previously communicated to us. (They were not, of course, formal treaties of this kind.) Finally there must be agreements for a parallel policy throughout the world, as for instance in the question of the 'open door.' If England wanted guarantees for her Indian possessions, we must demand a guarantee for Alsace-Lorraine and cover for our rear. With regard to the first point, Tirpitz stipulated that England should bind herself, from 1912 to 1917, not to build more than three ships yearly, if Germany only built two. If she exceeded this number Germany would then be free also.[1]

In his reply on October 13th, Bethmann agreed to supervision on both sides by means of attachés, but after consultation with the Kaiser, declared that a political agreement must precede the naval understanding. He complained greatly of England's unfriendly attitude in Morocco, in Persia, in the matter of the Bagdad railway, and of the Turkish debt; even the English representatives in foreign countries held deliberately aloof. It was this hostile attitude of the English Government towards us that had made public opinion in England so suspicious of our naval plans. England even doubted the veracity of our actual assertions. He had always regarded the removal of this ill-feeling on both sides as his first task, and he hoped that a satisfactory discussion could now be held. Considering that this document was intended to create a mood favourable to negotiation, it certainly contained an abundant supply of reproaches and complaints.

The English reply declared all the reproaches to be unfounded and some of them insulting; in many instances Germany had deliberately declined to co-operate, as in the Macedonian and

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[1] Comments of the Kaiser and Tirpitz on the English memorandum of August 14th, 1910. The Kaiser to Bethmann, more sceptical, September 30th.

Cretan difficulties. England was willing to continue negotiations, but only on condition that such reproaches were never again brought up. Bethmann replied that he had not intended to produce that effect; he had been misunderstood. Thereupon Sir Edward Grey assured Count Metternich that he urgently desired to see the two groups come closer and to find a formula which would do away with this appearance of opposite camps, and so ensure peace. The Ambassador had the impression that the desire for closer relations had never been so evident before on the English side, and attributed it to the concession in the matter of the exchange of naval intelligence.[1]

In spite of all, the negotiations remained at a standstill till the spring of 1911. On March 25th the English Ambassador, Goschen, handed in a new memorandum in Berlin. It contained no concrete proposals, only the old familiar general phrases. Bethmann was thoroughly dissatisfied; but in order to prevent the exchange of views coming to an end he replied by a document written in a similar strain.[2]

The crux of the situation was that Germany was not willing to offer anything substantial in regard to the fleet. England did not want a definite political agreement, and each side wished to lay upon the other the onus for the failure of the negotiations. Sir Edward Grey said to the Russian Ambassador that he considered the only formula possible was one which would include France and Russia; that again would be a sort of general agreement, but would not affect the actual situation.

The question of the Bagdad railway kept cropping up in these discussions. The position of the German company had been substantially strengthened by the great Austro-German loan to Turkey. In March, 1911, it received permission to proceed at once with the construction of the line to Bagdad and with the laying out of a harbour in Alexandretta. The leading French financial circles began to negotiate with it for a general agreement which seemed not unpromising. The English Government was also inclined to consent to a fresh proposal from the Bagdad Railway Company, by which the latter would be prepared to transfer its concession for the section from Bagdad to the Persian Gulf, to a new Turkish company which was to be formed, in the financing of which it would not be more strongly represented than the financial group of any other Great Power.

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[1] German memorandum, October 13th. Metternich, October 27th. English memorandum, December 1st. German reply, December 10th. Metternich, December 17th, 1910.

[2] English memorandum, March 25th, 1911. German answer, April 4th.

In the ensuing weeks no progress was made. On May 9th Germany announced that the moment for restricting the building of German ships had slipped away. From 1912 onwards Germany would build regularly two ships yearly; she could make no further reduction. The agreement was so drafted as to exclude any attack by the one Power on the other, and to make it obligatory, when a fresh difficulty presented itself, to have a friendly discussion. There was no question of pledges with regard to construction beyond 1917, as Tirpitz definitely declared that the building of three ships yearly must then be resumed. The Kaiser had gradually slipped back again into the Admiralty manner of thought. England's whole endeavour, he declared, was to keep us permanently to the rate of two a year, hence it was clear that every increase in our fleet produced English attempts at a *rapprochement.* "That helps directly to force them to an understanding with us." We must keep on quietly building and perhaps even before 1917 return to the rate of three a year. Bethmann admitted somewhat reluctantly that only the building of our fleet would bring England to reason; there was nothing for it but to wait until England herself made definite proposals.[1]

But this she did not do; the English reply on June 1st contained merely suggestions for a more precise definition regarding the exchange of information. Further discussions dealt exclusively with this matter. The negotiations were still in a state of suspense, when suddenly a new crisis broke out in Morocco and put an end to the political dead calm and the suspicious watchfulness of the adversaries.

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[1] German memorandum, May 9th. Tirpitz to the Imperial Chancellor, May 4th. Kaiser's telegram to Bethmann, May 14th. Bethmann to the Kaiser, May 15th.

# XIV. AGADIR AND TRIPOLI

Things had never absolutely quieted down in Morocco since the treaty of 1909. The obstacles raised by France to the commercial enterprises of the firm of Mannesmann Bros., the far-reaching financial obligations imposed on the Sultan Mulai Hafid, and the occupation of all the important administrative posts by Frenchmen, roused resentment and anxiety in Germany.

In March, 1911, a new Government came into office in France, the moving spirit of which was an old enemy of Germany, Delcassé, now Minister of Marine. The effort to bring about a complete and rapid subjection of Morocco became increasingly apparent. In Paris they seemed to have forgotten their repeated promises to respect the independence of the Sultan ; nor did they show the slightest inclination to consider Germany's economic interests in Morocco itself and in Central Africa, as they had appeared willing to do so long as the negotiations for the treaty of 1909 were still unsettled, and even for some time afterwards. Disturbances on the coast and in Fez, in which the safety of Europeans was supposed to be threatened, gave rise to a plan in April for occupying a second seaport town beyond Casablanca, Rabat. It is doubtful if there had been any serious disturbances. As on previous occasions, the incidents which were supposed to justify intervention were largely fomented by France herself and then worked up by the press to the necessary magnitude. Shortly afterwards the conviction was formed in Paris that Fez itself would have to be occupied, at least temporarily. Cambon informed the German Government of this, and at the same time stated that France would respect the Algeciras Treaty, and would evacuate the occupied territory once order had been restored. Bethmann and Kiderlen were emphatic in their warning that it would prove more difficult to leave Fez again than to go thither; but they neither expressed consent nor lodged a formal protest.[1] When the news came that the Sultan had been compelled by the insurgents to take refuge in the French Consulate at Fez, the Kaiser, who was then at Corfu, declared that France should be allowed to send an expedition thither; it would cost a lot of money and would tie up a considerable number of troops. If the Algeciras Treaty were infringed, we could quietly allow some of the other signatory Powers to make the first protest. In any case, he expected his Government to oppose any possible request for the sending of German warships to Morocco. To this Bethmann agreed.[2]

When the French expedition started, Kiderlen told M. Cambon that if the French remained permanently at Fez, the Sultan would no longer be regarded as an independent Sovereign, and thereby one of the fundamental conditions of the Algeciras Treaty would lapse. In that case Germany would consider that she had an absolutely free hand.[3] This same view was reproduced publicly in an article in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of April 30th. On May 3rd Kiderlen drew up his programme as follows. When the French have occupied Fez, let us ask them how long they intend to remain there. If they do not adhere to the time limit as announced, we shall then declare the Algeciras Treaty annulled and demand compensation. As mere protests are useless, let us send a warship to Agadir, as we are just as much justified as the French in taking measures to protect the life and property of our subjects. Agadir is said to be the best harbour in Southern Morocco. Let us occupy it as a pledge until France offers us adequate compensation out of her colonial possessions. In this way, he felt, we could give the Morocco incident a turn "which would wipe out the previous failures." Also a tangible success would improve the prospects in the impending elections for the Reichstag.[4]

Kiderlen seems to have troubled little about the effect his methods might produce on France and the outside world. He did not even think it necessary to ask the opinion of our Ambassador in Paris or to consult him as to the best way to proceed. What was to happen should France in spite of this action offer inadequate compensation, or none at all, as might quite well happen? Did he then mean to occupy Agadir indefinitely? We shall find that he only asked himself these important questions after the deed was done. At first he had no idea of going to war for the sake of Morocco. He seems to have expected with extraordinary simplicity that a threatening gesture would straightway bring forth offers of compensation from France. He had private information from Paris, obtained through a banker, that France would give us in colonial territories whatever we wanted provided we would leave her a free hand in Morocco.[1] Caillaux made similar non-binding statements to our Ambassador. It was upon this that Kiderlen seems to have been relying.

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[1] Cambon to Kiderlen, April 6th, 1911. Kiderlen to Cambon, April 7th. Schön, April 19th and 20th. Bethmann to Schön, April 19th.

[2] The Kaiser to Bethmann, April 22nd. Bethmann to the Kaiser, April 22nd and 25th.

[3] Kiderlen's note, April 28th.

[4] *Ibid.* May 3rd.

The Imperial Chancellor was in favour of this plan, which he defends even in his memoirs as the only means of making France declare herself. He and Kiderlen went immediately to Karlsruhe, which the Kaiser had reached on May 4th, to lay the proposal before him. Only a few days previously the Kaiser had sent word from Corfu deprecating any form of intervention in Morocco.[2] He had thought that, with the treaty carried through by him in 1909, the matter had been finally disposed of. Now he changed his mind, evidently because the Imperial Chancellor and the Secretary of State represented to him that such a favourable opportunity of rounding off our colonial empire in Africa should not be let slip. Although the Kaiser now approved in principle the attempt to demand compensations, he did not definitely authorise the despatch of a warship.[3] He clearly thought that everything had already been carefully prepared and could be carried through in a peaceful and friendly manner. In the following week he left for London to be present at the unveiling of a memorial to Queen Victoria. To King George, who had been questioning him somewhat anxiously, he said that he had no thought of war with France on account of Morocco, he merely wanted to uphold the policy of the ' open door ' and possibly seek compensations.[1]

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[1] Schön, May 7th.

[2] Jenisch to the Foreign Office, April 30th. Cf. also the whole course of the Imperial Chancellor's reports of July 10th and 20th, with the Kaiser's marginal comments.

[3] *Vide* Jackh, ii. 122. Kiderlen's remark at Karlsruhe on May 11th, "The Kaiser has sanctioned (also with ships for Agadir) my Morocco programme," does not tally with the fact that he had again to travel to the Kaiser to obtain his consent for the ships.

Again France solemnly protested that the occupation would not last longer than necessary and aimed at securing the sovereignty of the Sultan. If the pressure of circumstances led them further than they intended, said Cruppi, the Minister, they would come to an understanding with Germany (May 30th). Unofficially Herr von Schön was given to understand that France was prepared to transfer her Congo colony to Germany in exchange for the much smaller territory of Togo.[2]

On May 21st the French occupied Fez unopposed. On June 10th Cruppi declared to Herr von Schön that the town would be evacuated as soon as order was restored ; but French instructors were to remain behind to organise the Sultan's army and to establish a series of halting places so as to secure permanent communication with the capital.[3] In the middle of June Cambon, for the first time, let fall an official hint to the Imperial Chancellor as to the Congo.[4] Kiderlen thought now was the time to clear up the situation and to act. He met Cambon at Kissingen on June 19th and had a confidential interview. Both agreed in principle that compensation for Germany should be found in the Congo. Kiderlen said, " It must be a decent mouthful." Cambon nodded acquiescence, which, of course, did not commit him to anything, and left immediately for Paris to request the necessary authority from his Government. So far everything had proceeded with absolute smoothness. Germany lent no support to the Spaniards, who in their excitement had immediately sent troops into their sphere of influence so as not to be absolutely thrust aside by France.

The German representatives in Paris, with the Chancellor's approval, took no notice of any French hints, and the Chancellor himself refrained from putting any definite questions to Cambon, all with the intention of getting France to make the first offer. If she failed to do so, the earlier plan of action was then to hold good. Even before Kiderlen's interviews with Cambon, Zimmermann, the Under Secretary of State, had again brought forward the idea of hostages. On no account was the matter to end by letting France offer us only economic compensations or small rectifications of the frontiers, and, if we declined these, letting her drop the negotiations with a shrug of her shoulders. That would be a tremendous defeat for German policy. Four German warships must suddenly appear in Agadir and Mogador, and at the same time an announcement must be made that the Algeciras Treaty was no longer valid ; it had rested for five years on the fiction, now finally disposed of, that Morocco was an undivided State and the Sultan an independent Sovereign. All the signatory Powers had therefore recovered their complete liberty of action, and Germany must prepare to take further measures. Only in this way could France be induced to make real and adequate proposals for compensation. Our determination, Zimmermann argued, would have a tranquillising effect, and even the French Chauvinists would keep quiet if our press showed a right understanding of the measures taken by France.[1]

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[1] Bethmann's note, May 23rd.

[2] Zimmermann's note, May 15th. Schön, May 7th and 30th.

[3] Schön, June 10th.

[4] Schön, June 15th. Bethmann to Schön, June 16th.

Evidently Kiderlen wished to wait before taking decisive steps till he saw whether Cambon brought back any definite and formal offers with him from Paris. But when the Ambassador had been back for several days and made no move, he thought France intended to let things drag on till she had Morocco safely in her pocket, and so he decided to proceed with his original plan at once. On June 26th he travelled to Kiel to see the Kaiser, described to him the state of affairs, and received his consent to the proposed naval demonstration. His laconic telegram "Ships granted," announced to Zimmermann the success of his journey.[2]

Just at that time there was, as a matter of fact, only one small cruiser near enough to the North African coast to be on the spot at once. To everyone's surprise, on July 1st, the *Panther* appeared off Agadir. At the same moment a note was sent to the Great Powers explaining the German position. The sending of this warship was necessitated by the danger to German lives and property caused by the disturbances in Morocco; as soon as order was restored it would be withdrawn. Germany was ready to negotiate with the signatory Powers for a peaceful solution of the Morocco question and would willingly consider every suitable proposal, but held a return to previous conditions impossible, as the assumption that Morocco was an independent State was no longer in accordance with the facts.[1] A few days later, on July 9th, Cambon again met Kiderlen. At the outset, however, he spoke merely about concessions regarding the Bagdad railway and Turkish finances, and when, finally, the Secretary of State said that Germany wanted the transfer of colonial territories, which might be made in the form of an exchange, Cambon mentioned the Congo, but cautiously and without making any actual offer. He evidently intended Germany to bring forward a definite demand. But that Kiderlen was not prepared to do; instead, he urgently begged the Ambassador to obtain more detailed instructions from his Government. On this occasion he definitely stated that Germany had no idea of establishing herself permanently in Morocco.[2]

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[1] Zimmermann's memorandum, June 12th.

[2] Kiderlen to Zimmermann, June 26th.

A report of this conversation was submitted to the Kaiser, who had evidently been previously informed that everything was practically settled, and that the despatch of the warship was merely a little final pressure. He was greatly surprised and wrote underneath the text:

> "What the devil is to be done now? It is sheer farce, negotiating and negotiating and never getting any further. While we are wasting our precious time, the British and the Russians are stiffening up the French and dictating to them what they can at the most condescend to allow us. This kind of diplomacy is beyond my brain."

He wished that the French might now at last be induced to state their terms.

In Paris they were at first inclined to resent the presence of a warship as prejudicial to freedom of speech and a disturbing influence on public opinion. But after receiving Cambon's report they expressed their willingness to negotiate on the basis which it laid down; on their own account as well as on account of

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[1] Instruction and aide-mémoire for Paris and Madrid, June 30th. Similar instructions to Metternich, June 30th.

[2] Kiderlen's note, July 9th, *vide* Jäckh, ii. 123. Bethmann's report, July 10th, with marginal comments by the Kaiser.

English interests, they could not consent to any transfer of territory in Morocco.[1]

On July 15th, Cambon again visited Kiderlen, but carefully avoided mentioning any offer. Kiderlen finally lost patience and declared that if he had still no definite official demand to make, he would tell him as his own private opinion that we should ask for the whole of the French Congo. Cambon stood aghast and declared even a partial surrender of this colony would entail great difficulties, as Germany had only vague claims, shared moreover with other Powers, to offer in exchange. The Kaiser, who received this report while on his northern cruise, was extremely dissatisfied, and thought that precious time had been wasted in bringing the French to make the first offer. We ought to have said two months ago what we wanted. He expressly forbade any steps which involved threats being taken during his absence. The course of events had confirmed him in his old aversion from allowing Morocco to become an apple of discord, and he was afraid lest a general war might result from this comparatively unimportant matter. Von Treutler, the envoy in the Kaiser's suite, thought it necessary to draw Kiderlen's attention to the fact that " it would be very difficult to gain His Majesty's consent to steps which he considers liable to lead to war." [2]

Kiderlen felt the negotiations might be very protracted, and now he asked himself what would happen if France offered no adequate compensation ? He explained to the Imperial Chancellor that it would be difficult to put forward demands which did not threaten to bring us into conflict with other Powers. England would never consent to our remaining in Morocco. " Nor do I know where we are to get the means for such a proceeding." Hence the necessity for seeking a solution with France by further negotiations without outside intervention.[3] At the same time he stated in a private letter to the Chancellor that in his opinion nothing could be gained unless Paris was made to feel that the failure of the negotiations meant war. " We shall only obtain a satisfactory settlement," he wrote, " if we are prepared to face the worst, *i.e.* if the others feel and realise that. Those who declare in advance that they will not fight cannot expect success in politics." The only satisfactory settlement in his opinion was the acquisition of the whole French Congo. "We must have the whole French Congo—it is the last opportunity of getting something useful in Africa without fighting." The acceptance of a smaller compensation would inevitably be interpreted as weakness on our part.[1]

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[1] Schön, July 2nd and 12th.

[2] Report of July 15th, partly given in Jäckh, ii. 126. Treutler to the Foreign Office, July 17th (two telegrams ; for the first *vide* Jäckh ii. 127 and 128 n.).

[3] Kiderlen to Bethmann, July 17th.

Taken together these statements show that Kiderlen probably hoped to obtain the whole Congo without fighting, but only if France knew that otherwise she would have to fight. Undoubtedly he himself was then ready to face the risk of war if France refused the concession demanded. To emphasise these remarks he added that if the Kaiser or the Chancellor refused his policy he would send in his resignation.

So this so-called great statesman would not have hesitated to involve Germany in a war for her very existence in order to gain the French Congo. Could he really believe that he could win over the Kaiser and Bethmann for such a policy? Or did he already feel that he had got himself into a cul-de-sac and wished to get rid of the responsibility if the wall that blocked his path were not forcibly knocked down?

The Imperial Chancellor was greatly perplexed. He told Kiderlen in reply that if he sent in his resignation on account of the Morocco policy, he would resign also; but he must first have a talk with him. He informed the Kaiser briefly that so far they had kept within the limits of the programme sanctioned by him and would continue to do so.[2] Kiderlen, nevertheless, in a second letter, insisted on his point of view, and requested the Chancellor to find out if he still possessed the Kaiser's confidence or else to release him from his office. But Bethmann did neither. As the result of a personal interview Kiderlen abandoned his attempt to tie the Kaiser or the Chancellor down to his line of action. For next day, with his knowledge and probably his tacit consent, Bethmann assured the Kaiser he would never attempt to exceed the limits laid down for him without His Majesty's authority, and at the same time he declared that if no compensation were obtainable from France he would have no line of retreat save the very unsatisfactory one of urging the carrying out of the Algeciras Treaty in its full extent.[1] Inasmuch as he consented to this, Kiderlen renounced his plan of acquiring the Congo by force of arms if necessary, although only shortly before he had regarded the acceptance of this as necessary for the success of his policy and as the condition on which he would remain in office. Evidently the Kaiser never heard of his projected resignation.[2]

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[1] Kiderlen to the Imperial Chancellor, July 17th, evening. Jäckh, ii. 128.

[2] Bethmann to the Kaiser, July 18th. Bethmann to Kiderlen, July 18th. Jäckh, ii. 128.

These statements from the two officials responsible for the guidance of our policy afford the most scathing condemnation of the line of conduct hitherto pursued. In the expectation of an easy success they had plunged into an adventure without considering how they were to extricate themselves if things took a different turn from what they expected.

The French Minister rejected outright the demand for the surrender of the whole of the French Congo, but authorised further negotiations.[3]

In London they had been wondering what Germany really intended. From Metternich's assurances they had at first thought that it would be a question of colonial compensations of no great compass. They wished to leave the decision entirely with France, and felt that their own interests were not immediately concerned, although from the beginning it had been plainly stated that in any final settlement of the Morocco question England must be included.[4] The English press took up a hostile attitude to Germany from the very start and the Government did nothing to check it. But when it was learned that Germany was claiming the whole Congo, or at least a considerable share of it, it was thought that there was a strong likelihood of the negotiations failing. What was to happen then? Nicolson told the Russian Ambassador on July 19th that Germany would then probably remain in Agadir, which had perhaps been intended all along. In that case the situation was serious, as England's interests would thereby be vitally affected.[1] Sir Edward Grey expressed the same fear to Metternich on the 21st; there was no knowing whether Germany might not occupy Agadir permanently and even develop it as a naval port. The Ambassador replied that these were only suppositions; England could wait and see if her interests were actually infringed, which the German Government, in his opinion, had no intention of doing. It was not Germany but France who by her procedure had upset the existing situation in Morocco. England here seemed to be measuring with two different standards. Grey replied that he had no objection to Germany's colonial expansion in Central Africa. But as it was uncertain what arrangements might be reached with France, it would be better to discuss the Agadir question with England before new developments took place. Metternich's undoubtedly correct impression of this interview was that England wished to take part in the negotiations in order to prevent Germany from establishing herself permanently in southern Morocco, but that she was not opposed to German expansion in some other place.[2] On the same day that this interview took place, Lloyd George at a banquet made a speech in which he reviewed the general situation and declared that Great Britain could not under any circumstances consent to be treated in matters which concerned her vital interests as if she was no longer to be reckoned with in the council of the nations. In such a contingency, peace at any price would be an intolerable humiliation for a great country. He evidently considered it necessary to warn Germany. It is well to remember that Metternich had said nothing as to what Germany would do if the undertaking with France proved a failure. He could not do so, because he had no information on the subject, and because they themselves in Berlin did not then know. It was only on the previous day that they had found a way out by falling back on the Algeciras Treaty. Had Metternich been in a position to give Grey the definite assurance that we should not under any circumstances seek to retain Agadir, whatever the result of the negotiations with France, Lloyd George might perhaps not have made his speech. On the other hand, a declaration of this kind would be a serious matter because, being immediately communicated to Paris, it might easily rouse the impression there that they need not offer much, as the occupation of Agadir was not to be considered seriously. The more we realise this dilemma, the more obvious it is how rashly and inconsiderately Kiderlen had plunged into this undertaking and how difficult it was to put into practice the theory of hostages.

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[1] Bethmann to the Kaiser, July 20th.

[2] It is well to mention that at the beginning of August Kiderlen told the naval representatives that it was impossible to go to war for the sake of Morocco, and at the same time explained that if we insisted on all the conditions of the Algeciras Treaty being fulfilled, France would acquiesce officially and linger interminably over its execution; hence even a small compensation was preferable. *Vide* Captain Seebohm's letter to Tirpitz, August 8th (Tirpitz, *Dokumente*, p. 201).

[3] Schön, July 18th.

[4] Metternich, July 1st, 3rd, 4th.

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[1] Siebert, 423.

[2] Metternich, July 21st.

The impression made by Lloyd George's speech was highly important. In France it was regarded as a declaration that they could count on England's help in case of need, in Germany as a threat to which they must not yield on any account. Kiderlen at once informed Metternich that Germany had never contemplated building a naval harbour, and was only wanting to compel France either to come to a friendly understanding or to revert to the status of the Algeciras Treaty—the same Algeciras Treaty which they had only recently declared to be utterly null and void because from the beginning it had rested on false premises. He was indignant also that France had informed her allies as to the progress of the negotiations, although the strictest secrecy had been enjoined. On the following day, when the unfavourable effect of Lloyd George's speech on public opinion in Germany had become more pronounced, he added that he did not see why England had not sought direct discussion with us before resorting to public threats. If she wished to confuse the situation and to bring about a great upheaval, she could not have chosen a better means. But if the intention of a threat was denied, Metternich was to demand an official and uncompromising declaration to that effect.[1]

As Metternich was now able to inform Grey officially that we should not under any circumstances remain in southern Morocco, Sir Edward declared that he was considerably relieved and would announce the fact in Parliament. To this Kiderlen at once objected, as that might give the impression that we had made this declaration under the pressure of Lloyd George's speech. Grey was willing to avoid reference to it in Parliament, but said that he could not then produce a tranquillising effect; and besides, the speech contained no threats. If Germany for herself

[1] Kiderlen to Metternich, July 23rd and 24th.

alone undertook to restore the old situation, matters might become even more serious. He was far from desiring to put difficulties in the way of an understanding between Germany and France, but England must protect herself against any violation of her interests. Metternich replied with considerable heat that there was no occasion for such a suspicion; the more threatening warnings were issued against us, the more boldly we would come forward. He mentions in his dispatch that the interview had been very animated, but had kept within the bounds of diplomatic etiquette, which shows that Grey was not wrong when he described the interview to the Russian Ambassador as "stormy." Metternich attributed the English attitude partly to pressure from France and anxiety for the maintenance of the Entente, and partly to the feeling that English interests might really be imperilled. Nevertheless he believed that England did not desire a hostile clash, but a peaceful understanding between France and Germany.

Kiderlen commissioned the Ambassador to say that they trusted to Grey's loyalty, once he had convinced himself that British interests were not really threatened, to say so publicly and to say also publicly that he desired an understanding. It certainly did not help matters to represent German claims in advance as exaggerated.[1] Kiderlen was not speaking strictly in accordance with the truth when he told the Kaiser that Lloyd George had made his speech although Grey had expressed himself greatly satisfied at our renunciation of Moroccan territory. As a matter of fact this statement was only made by Metternich two days later. Kiderlen also declared to the Kaiser that if an agreement was not reached we must insist on the strict adherence to the Algeciras Treaty. This point of view was legally unassailable.[2] The latter statement might be correct, but it is another question whether it was either wise from a political point of view or even feasible.

Between Berlin and Paris there now began interminable haggling about portions of territory, the French incidentally offering to allow the right of pre-emption on the Belgian Congo.

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[1] Metternich, July 24th, 25th, 27th. Kiderlen to Metternich, July 25th and 26th. Cf. Siebert, 430.

[2] Kiderlen to Treutler, July 26th.

Caillaux also revived the old idea of a liquidation of all colonial disputed questions, including the Bagdad railway, the Turkish debt, the admission of German shares to the Paris Bourse, and a new delimitation of seaboard territories, because it would be easier to make adjustments in particular instances within the framework of a wider agreement. Nevertheless Kiderlen did not consider it desirable to consent to this; he evidently feared further delay in reaching a settlement for which the Kaiser was again pressing.[1] France also threatened incidentally that a French and an English warship would be sent to Agadir, whereupon, with the Kaiser's consent, Kiderlen refused to continue the negotiations until this threat had been withdrawn. The Kaiser was so indignant that, in direct contrast to his previous attitude, he considered whether we ought not to occupy further places unless France soon made an acceptable offer. The episode was closed by Caillaux declaring that he had merely said that hot-heads might count on the possibility of warships being sent, not that the Government intended doing so.[2] The negotiations were greatly hampered by the attitude of the French press, which made it appear as if Germany was gradually withdrawing completely in view of France's determination. The French army was ready for battle, and Germany would always fall back when faced by an energetic opponent rather than push things to extremes.[3]

In the middle of September a settlement was at last reached regarding the delimitation of the territory. There were still some differences as to the future position of Germans in Morocco. The French refused the German request for a share of the railway construction in Morocco. Early in October this point, too, was settled. At the last moment Caillaux attempted to negotiate for a strip of land on the Ubangi, in order to establish a connection between the French colonies in return for the right of pre-emption on the Belgian Congo, as the treaty would then be easier to carry through in Parliament. As Germany declined this proposal, Caillaux declared that France would keep to her promise; but instead of the hoped-for improvement in the general relations of the two countries, which could not be realised when Germany showed such an uncompromising spirit, there was a legacy of rancour. At the very end Kiderlen made a slight concession on the frontier question for which the French Minister thanked him with great cordiality.[1] On October 23rd, in an exchange of notes, both Governments expressed the wish to develop more friendly relations. On November 2nd the Congo agreement in its final form was submitted to the Kaiser, and immediately thereafter it was signed and published (November 4th). At Caillaux's request, in the end of November, the German cruiser was recalled from Agadir, a service which the Minister promised to acknowledge.[2] Germany had received an extension of her Cameroon colony at the expense of the French Congo as compensation for renouncing absolutely any further interference in Morocco. Opinions differed widely as to the value of this acquisition. Von Lindequist, the Colonial Secretary, completely misjudged the whole treaty, and during the negotiations he had tendered his resignation because his objections were disregarded ; but it was not accepted until after the conclusion of the treaty. We may say that Kiderlen was really aiming at prestige, a mere outward success, expressed in square miles of primeval forest and an indefinite number of native inhabitants. If he sometimes gave an indication of a larger African colonial policy, the idea animating him was simply to demonstrate the value and the reason of the prospective acquisitions. For the development of Germany's colonial empire in Africa this gain was of little importance.

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[1] Schön, July 27th, August 25th, September 5th. Kiderlen to Treutler, July 28th.

[2] Schön, August 4th and 8th. Jenisch to Kiderlen, August 6th. Kiderlen to Schön, August 8th.

[3] Schön, August 10th.

Although of very questionable value it entailed on us serious disadvantages of a general kind. The Entente press diligently disseminated the idea that Germany with her mailed fist would enforce her will everywhere and even risk the danger of a world-wide war for the sake of a few scraps of African territory. In France they were embittered by the compulsion exercised by Germany ; but in public they depicted the transaction very cleverly, making it appear as if Germany had shamelessly demanded the whole of the Congo at the beginning, and then, on France remaining resolute, had so far relented as to content herself with a comparatively insignificant strip of territory. Kiderlen's imprudent original claim lent colour to this assertion. Although only recently she had signed a friendly agreement with Germany, England was provoked anew to a hostile attitude; for Morocco was the only point in which she was bound by treaty to support France. They had breathed more freely in London when this question had been settled by means of the 1909 treaty, and it was a very painful surprise to find Germany again making claims. The incident at Agadir had compelled England to recognise her obligations anew and to confirm them, which thereby strengthened the Entente. Finally, the sending of the *Panther* had roused great expectations in Germany, leading many to believe that southern Morocco was to be retained; and when the Government shortly afterwards exchanged it for part of the Congo, it was regarded as retreating before France and England. The Government was accused of weakness, and so missed the success it had hoped for at home.

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[1] Lancken, October 3rd. Kiderlen to Schön, October 21st. Schön, October 21st.

[2] Cambon to Kiderlen, November 14th. Schön, November 26th and 28th.

On the whole it was an ill-conceived action, dictated by the desire for prestige and the wish to blot out the failure of Algeciras. The old tradition of Holstein's days still carried weight with Kiderlen. The danger of the general situation had been undoubtedly increased for us; where extreme caution should have prevailed a dashing stroke was light-heartedly attempted which cost us far more in prestige than it was worth. France's reckless procedure was certainly provocative, but it would have been much wiser, even so, not to have been provoked, as the Kaiser had rightly said at the outset. His consent was wrung from him by the supposed prospect of getting gains easy and substantial with France's full consent. With the peaceful Chancellor, who was certainly not prone to adventures, the importance of the legal standpoint seems to have been paramount: he was always peculiarly accessible to formal considerations. The driving force was undoubtedly Kiderlen-Wächter, who was responsible for the pressure on Russia in March, 1909, just as he now tried to obtain greater concessions from France by means of threats of war more or less veiled. He considered that the only proper and successful way to conduct politics was to negotiate with a pistol in your hand, or, at least, bulging in your coat-pocket. As a diplomatic expert he knew how at the start to carry the Imperial

Chancellor with him, for Bethmann was never sure of his ground in foreign affairs ; but at the critical moment he had to sound the retreat when he saw that neither Bethmann nor the Kaiser was in favour of a policy which might produce immediate war.

A word must be said about the influence of these proceedings on our relations with England. In November an Englishman, Captain Faber, made some sensational revelations which seemed to afford proof that during the summer England had been on the verge of war with Germany. On closer inspection it is evident that what he wanted to prove was that the English fleet was not ready for action in the summer, and that he only asserted by the way that the Cabinet had decided upon active support of France in the event of a Franco-German war, whereupon there had been a divergence of opinion whether this support should be by the fleet alone or whether an expeditionary army also should be landed in Belgium. This may be true ; there is no doubt that the English Government was determined to help the French in case of need ; Metternich always emphasised this point in his despatches. But there is as yet no proof of the assertion that England made any actual preparations for war in the summer of 1911. Besides, Grey, as is clearly seen in his discussion with the Russian Ambassador, was of the opinion from the end of July that the negotiations would end amicably. It is utterly improbable that England either wanted war with Germany at that time or stirred up France to bring it about. Grey certainly held the view that if war broke out between France and Germany, Britain must help France. He expressly said so to the Russian Ambassador on August 16th. He also added that he did not believe the Kaiser had ever wished it or wanted it now.[1] Such an admission from this man is the best witness to the peaceful character of German policy. What Grey had in his mind in this whole conversation cannot be definitely ascertained. By indicating that Russia, of whose defective armaments he was aware, might also be drawn in, he may possibly have desired that the Czar should use his influence in Paris on behalf of peace.

In any case our relations with the Western Powers were now much more strained than formerly, and Russia, engrossed by her military and economic reconstruction, held aloof. In Germany the demand was constantly growing louder for a fresh increase in the navy so as to be safe in the event of a surprise attack from England.

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[1] Siebert, 435.

The immediate results were far from pleasant for Germany. In France Caillaux's Ministry was defeated in January, 1912. It was accused of too great compliance towards Germany. At the head of the new Government was the Lorrainer, Raymond Poincaré, a doughty champion of the idea of a *revanche*, who became Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Henceforward, according to Bethmann, Jules Cambon showed a different spirit in Berlin, and there was no more word of a desire for closer relations and better understanding. France was in a triumphant mood. The dominant impression was that Germany, in spite of her loud voice and threatening gestures, had given way in presence of the calm determination of France and her ally England. A feeling of superiority highly dangerous for the peace of the world had gained the upper hand in Paris.

The influence of the Morocco crisis on the general international situation was equally great and ominous. The definite occupation of Morocco by France drove Italy to establish herself in Tripoli, which, in turn, was the signal for the Balkan States to revolt against Turkey, and, ultimately, for the world war.

Long before this, Italy, through agreements with the Great Powers, had secured their consent to the occupation of Tripoli. She had hitherto postponed taking definite action, as she knew that to the two partners in the Triple Alliance any active proceedings against Turkey would be highly obnoxious. Moreover, it was not easy to find a plausible pretext for attacking Turkey.

France's procedure in Morocco helped the Government in Rome to come to a decision. France's disinterested attitude in Tripoli had its counterpart in Italy's attitude in Morocco. If the French were now quietly allowed to take Morocco, without Italy realising her own desires there, the promises given in Paris might easily pass into oblivion.[1] The equivalent service would then have been given in advance by Italy without anything being got for herself.

[1] Tittoni expressly mentioned this motive to Iswolski. *Vide* his despatch of September 27th (*Livre noir*, i. 138).

There was also another consideration. Since Racconigi the Italians were aware that Russia was planning to partition European Turkey among the Balkan States, which might lead to a conflict with Austria. In that case they wanted to have their hands free, as they frankly told the Russian representatives, and to settle the Tripoli difficulty before anything happened in the Balkans. Behind this naturally lay the fear that if Austria gained an extension of territory for herself, she might indicate Tripoli as the compensation which by Treaty would be due to Italy ; this would be no longer possible if Italy had already seized Tripoli. Finally, Turkey was so deeply engaged in combating insurrectionary movements in Arabia and Albania that the opportunity seemed peculiarly favourable.

At the end of August, 1911, Italy informed the Powers that she wished to restore peace in Tripoli, which, as a matter of fact, was not more disturbed than was usual in these outlying parts of the Turkish Empire. Germany and Austria had previously been informed, and could not raise any serious objection, as they had bound themselves by treaty to support Italy's wishes in this matter. Aehrenthal was indeed glad to feel that Italy's interests and forces for some time to come would be diverted from the Balkans. Nevertheless there was a strong party in Vienna, led by General Conrad von Hötzendorf, who were keenly opposed to Italy's proceedings, and if she persisted in entangling herself in this enterprise, wished to use this chance to break definitely with these irreconcilable Italians. Even at the time of the meeting at Racconigi, General Conrad had in vain recommended a preventive war against these double-dealing allies. The archducal heir to the throne at that time did not take up a clear position. He had previously announced at Berlin that he did " not identify himself in any way with Aehrenthal. I put up with him, but there are a great many questions on which we do not agree." [1] He opposed the renewal of the Triple Alliance, and still aimed at reviving the old League of the Three Emperors, which at one time had also figured on Aehrenthal's programme but had long since been given up by him as impracticable.[2] Nor was he in favour of war as the solution. The aged Emperor had finally and definitely decided for a peaceful policy, and for the immediate opening of negotiations for the renewal of the Triple Alliance, which would expire in 1914. These certainly were delayed through Italy's fault till after the outbreak of the war in Tripoli. Even after war had begun, Aehrenthal's pro-Italian policy retained the upper hand at Vienna in spite of all. The Emperor Francis Joseph rejected General Conrad's proposal to attack Italy while heavily engaged in Tripoli, or at least to profit by her embarrassments and make a definite advance in the Balkans. "So long as Italy does not attack us, this war will not happen," the Emperor said to him. At Aehrenthal's request General Conrad sent in his resignation (December 2nd, 1911).

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[1] Tschirschky, January 27th, 1910. Cf. General Conrad, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, vol. ii. 171, with many documents.

[2] Report by the military attaché in Vienna, November 24th, 1911.

In Germany there was a fear lest a Turkish defeat should react on the Balkans and lead to an attack by Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece on Turkey, perhaps to a new revolution in Constantinople, or to the occupation of Arabia by the English. The Kaiser was desirous, immediately on reaching a settlement of the Morocco question, to join with France in common measures to stifle a Balkan conflagration. He thought that as French financial interests in North Africa and the Near East were threatened, the authorities in Paris would favour this plan.[1] In his annoyance at England's attitude during the Agadir crisis he even fell back on the old idea of a Continental League. To a Frenchman he expressed himself as follows: "We are the only two military nations. We together might do as we liked in the world." To the French Military Attaché he said that the Continent must be closed against England.[2] He suggested to the Foreign Office an understanding with France, but would not entertain the idea of any co-operation with England. Nevertheless, in spite of this they felt their way in London. Metternich, however, told them that there the dismemberment of Turkey and Russia's advance on Constantinople were considered inevitable.[3]

It was impossible to be more absolutely mistaken as to the prevailing mood in France than was the Kaiser. At that time Paul Cambon remarked in London that, even if an understanding with Germany were reached then, it would only be postponing war for three or four years. That was also in the interests of France and Russia, as they would then be better equipped. A breach was bound to come, otherwise they would be constantly exposed to fresh attempts from Germany to override them.[1] Meanwhile events took their course. Through Germany's instrumentality Turkey offered far-reaching economic concessions in Tripoli if Italy would renounce violent measures. In Rome they declared it was too late ; public opinion demanded energetic action. On September 28th Italy handed her ultimatum to Turkey ; on the following day came her refusal and the declaration of war. On October 5th Tripoli was occupied, and in the ensuing weeks the more important seaport towns.

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[1] Kaiser to Kiderlen, September 28th, 1911. Jenisch to Kiderlen, September 29th. Kiderlen to the Kaiser, September 29th and 30th.

[2] Rapport, p. 359.

[3] Metternich, October 17th.

Soon after the outbreak of the war the Italian Government, through the medium of Germany, offered to recognise the Sultan's formal suzerainty provided the administration of Tripoli was handed over to her, as had been done in the case of Bosnia and Austria. The utmost the Porte was willing to grant was a provisory occupation or a lease, which the Italians did not consider adequate.[2] As soon as the town of Tripoli had been occupied the Italians were dazzled by thoughts of triumph, and their Government now considered even a formal acknowledgment of the Sultan's suzerainty out of the question.[3] As the Turks would not consent to complete surrender, even if the Sultan's spiritual rights as Caliph were expressly safeguarded, all attempts at intervention were useless. Cries for help from Turkey, which had been attacked while at peace without any plausible excuse, fell unheeded by the Great Powers. Russia would willingly have intervened along with France and England, but these Powers declined. In their despair the Turks even thought of flinging themselves upon the mercy of England, who was the least favourably disposed towards them and had taken the chance of seizing the Bay of Sollum in the frontier zone between Egypt and Tripoli. But in London they received the chilling answer that nothing could be discussed until Turkey had severed her connection with Germany and had complied with England's wishes in the matter of the Bagdad Railway.[1]

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[1] The Serbian chargé d'affaires, September 8th. (Boghitchetvitch, 141.)

[2] Marschall, September 25th. Kiderlen to Jagow, September 27th. Jagow to the Foreign Office, October 2nd, 3rd, 9th.

[3] Jagow, October 9th. Marschall, October 15th.

Russia judged the moment opportune to open up again the question of the Straits, which had been postponed in 1908.[2] In October a secret agreement was offered to the Sultan by which Russian warships were to be allowed free passage through the Straits, in return for which Russia undertook to hold back the Balkan States from any attack upon Turkey, and to guarantee permanently the Sultan's possession of Constantinople and the surrounding territory. In Paris these plans met with very indifferent support; in London they roused strong opposition. Grey considered the time ill-judged, and that the Russian request must be closely examined as to its compatibility with existing treaties. He regarded a guarantee of Turkish territory as extremely dangerous. Italy would treat it as evidence of hostility. Count Benckendorff proposed the drafting of a new treaty with England on all matters concerning the Near East, but doubted if they would consent to this in London. Enquiries were also made in Berlin. Kiderlen declared that he had no doubts, and undertook to win over the Vienna Cabinet. On the other hand, von Marschall was indignant at this attempt "to destroy the foundations of the existing constitutional law in the Near East." Austria's interests were thereby seriously threatened, and also all that Germany had been working for for twenty years past. If England agreed to that, then "there is no longer any doubt that the Triple Entente is an aggressive alliance with the view of becoming the sole controlling power in Europe and European spheres of interests."[3] In Vienna they were very guarded in what they said. They dreaded any strengthening of the maritime position of the Entente in the Mediterranean and wanted at least to have some tangible equivalent. Aehrenthal declared that this had also been Bülow's standpoint previously; but he did not know actually what Germany had obtained from the Russians at Potsdam.[4]

Turkey sought to use this opportunity to conclude a lasting alliance with the Entente on the stipulation that she should be protected from Italy's demands; but in this she met with a curt refusal from the Western Powers. They indeed were much more concerned to attract Italy to the Entente, and were glad that the Italians drew their troops for the expedition from the French and not from the Austrian frontier. Russia also hoped that Austria later on would be compelled to transfer troops from the Galician to the Italian frontier.

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[1] Marschall, October 31st.

[2] Siebert, 674. *Livre noir*, i. 140. Stieve, i. 155.

[3] Marschall, December 2nd.

[4] Tschirschky, November 20th.

After the Turkish Government had refused any modification of the Treaty of Berlin, Russia represented the whole incident as having been a personal move on the part of Tcharykoff, the Ambassador in Constantinople, for which he had no authority.[1]

The war itself lasted longer than had been anticipated in Rome. The advance into the interior presented great difficulties and made small progress. As the Turks absolutely refused to consent to the surrender of Tripoli, whereas Italy on November 5th had announced the annexation of the territory, there arose the difficult question of how to compel the Turks to yield. Small operations in the Red Sea proved naturally of little use. In the spring of 1912 the Italians occupied Samos, Rhodes, and a number of other Turkish islands in the Aegean Sea and twice over they made a vain attempt to enter the Dardanelles.

The extension of the war to the Aegean Sea at once opened up great difficulties. According to Article 7 of the Triple Alliance Treaty, Austria was entitled to compensation for any, even a temporary, occupation by Italy of islands or places on the coast. Already in the winter Aehrenthal had lodged a protest against an eventual extension of the war into the Aegean or Adriatic Seas. From Berlin they had strongly advised the Austrians not to put any difficulties in the way of the Italian plans, so that if they were unsuccessful the Italian Government could not to their own people lay the blame on Vienna. As a matter of fact Austria contented herself with merely stating her claims and postponed pressing them till the war was over.[2]

On February 17th, 1912, Count Aehrenthal died. As we know, for some time back he had ceased to possess the confidence of the heir to the throne. In Berlin also he had not been trusted of recent years, and it was even believed that he was striving for a closer relationship with Russia so as to feel the German alliance no longer indispensable. There was felt to be an element of duplicity in his policy. Our Ambassador once declared that this ambitious man was certain to pursue his plans "without us, if not even against us." [1] His successor was Count Berchtold, who, like Aehrenthal, had formerly been Ambassador in St. Petersburg. He was full of the self-importance of the old Austrian aristocracy, but fundamentally nervous, very excitable, and apt in critical situations to lose his self-control. He favoured an approach to Russia much more strongly than his predecessor, and regarded Italy as the real enemy of the Monarchy, apart of course from Serbia. Our Ambassador thought that he was inclined to make concessions to the Russians in the matter of the Straits, provided Russia would promise to remain neutral in the event of a conflict with Serbia. He rightly considered such efforts on the Minister's part useless, as Russia might possibly, in return for compensations, acquiesce in the overthrow of Serbia if it were a *fait accompli*, but would certainly never consent to it in anticipation.[2]

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[1] The Serbian Ambassador, Popovitch, December 4th. Boghitchetvitch, 167.

[2] Oberndorf, September 28th. Jagow, October 3rd. Marschall, February 17th. Kiderlen to Marschall, February 18th.

In the negotiations for the renewal of the Triple Alliance Count Berchtold was even more reticent than his predecessor. He did not desire any alteration of the text nor did he wish the special conditions with regard to Albania included in the main treaty. He let it be understood that he regarded certain of the existing conditions as bearing hardly on Austria; and the Triple Alliance as a whole as being "debatable." The Kaiser, who stopped at Vienna in March, 1912, on his way to Italy, sought in vain to convince him that King Victor Emmanuel had been carried away against his will by the popular clamour in favour of war with Turkey, and that a few small mishaps at sea which had led to friction with France would cause him in future to adhere more closely to the Triple Alliance. Moreover, the struggle for Tripoli would divert Italy from the Balkans and the Adriatic. Berchtold was very sceptical of these conclusions. Kiderlen urged that the Italians should be left a free hand in the Dardanelles and the islands in Asia Minor, provided they promptly consented to the renewal of the Triple Alliance; but this Berchtold declined. He insisted strongly on the obligations of the Italian Government towards Austria and on the possible serious consequences of the extension of the conflict to the shores of the Aegean Sea. In vain Kiderlen called his attention to the danger of Italy's attitude in the event of war with Russia and France. Berchtold was afraid that as soon as the Italians occupied an island in the neighbourhood of the Dardanelles, Bulgaria would immediately attack and the Balkan problem would become acute.

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[1] Tschirschky, January 28th, 1910.

[2] Tschirschky, February 24th, 1912.

During the Italo-Turkish War, Germany was obliged to look on and temporise. To prevent the opposition between Italy and Austria breaking out into actual conflict, and a hostile feeling developing in Turkey against Germany and Austria, as Italy's allies, were hard problems for which as far as possible a peaceful solution had to be found.

The most serious and vital consequence of the war, as regards the general situation, was that the Balkan States were emboldened to attack Turkey in her difficult position and to use their opportunity to attain their old aims. This necessitated an understanding among themselves which was not easy, and their attack was on this account delayed till the autumn of 1912.

During the critical and dangerous situation in spring and summer another attempt was made to establish better relations between England and Germany, which, had it completely succeeded, might possibly have given to events a different direction.

# XV. THE GERMAN NAVY LAWS AND HALDANE'S MISSION

After the Morocco crisis public opinion in England was much divided. While Germany's action in Morocco provided a further reason for recognising the Entente as necessary and Germany as the invariable disturber of the peace, there was another and totally different line of thought. Twice over, in the spring of 1909 and the summer of 1911, there had been the possibility of a formidable war which, had it broken out, would have been waged not for any English interest but for Russia's position in the Balkans, or France's position in Morocco. The question was, could a policy which entailed such consequences be right ? From this critical attitude towards the Entente came a disposition to draw nearer to Germany. This was confirmed by Russia's arbitrary proceedings in Persia since October, 1911.[1] The danger of a Russian advance on Teheran had again reappeared. The demands which Russia had originally presented to Persia, the fulfilment of which had been promised unconditionally through England's intervention, she now replaced by new and more stringent ones in order to be able to continue her advance. Russia's methods in Persia were undoubtedly of a very questionable nature and directly counter to the stipulations of the treaty of 1907. They were convincingly exposed by the revelations of Morgan Shuster, an energetic and wary American, who had devoted his resources unselfishly to the task of reorganising the Persian financial administration, and had been thrust aside by craft and force as soon as the Russians saw that his efforts were likely to succeed. His revelations caused a great sensation in England, and criticism of the treaty with the barbarous Russians which had never been very popular began to grow unpleasantly pronounced. The Russian Ambassador, Count Benckendorff, warned his Government repeatedly to proceed warily, as there was no knowing but that Grey would have to yield to the popular feeling. Sir Edward had indeed declared that he personally would pursue no other policy than that hitherto followed, since he thought it the only right one. But if he were turned out of office no one knew what direction English policy might take.

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[1] Cf. Siebert, p. 211, and *Englishe Dokumente zur Erdrosselung Persiens*, Berlin, 1917.

In Germany feeling had been greatly inflamed against England by Lloyd George's speech and Captain Faber's revelations. When the Kaiser told Goschen, the English Ambassador, that there was a growing conviction that England used every opportunity to foment difficulties for Germany's peaceful expansion in the world, or when he insisted that France's obstinacy in the Morocco negotiations was due to England's nagging activity, he was merely saying what most people were thinking.[1] Metternich told English statesmen and also King George that in Germany people were convinced that in any European complication England would be on the enemy side; our public opinion now regarded England as our principal opponent.[2] The Kaiser remarked of an English newspaper article in November, " British pride and envy of us are the mainspring of English policy, working against us more or less secretly."

The settlement of the Morocco crisis, in Metternich's opinion, afforded an opportunity for a *rapprochement* because it removed the only cause which would have involved England in war with Germany. There certainly was talk of its happening in the spring, but in influential circles such a view had no support. In November, 1911, Metternich sent word that there was a widespread desire for a reconciliation with Germany. Sir Edward Grey had himself said to him that he was hoping for better relations. In Metternich's opinion we were once again at the parting of the ways, and it was not yet too late to choose the path of conciliation. In a private letter to the Imperial Chancellor he confessed what made him anxious in spite of all. It was the agitation for a further increase of the fleet which had broken out with full force.[1]

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[1] Kaiser to Bethmann, August 12th. Jenisch to Bethmann, August 13th, 1911.

[2] Metternich, August 19th.

Tirpitz had undoubtedly intended for a long time past to bring in a new supplementary law before the expiry of the old naval law fell due (1917). He was greatly annoyed on a previous occasion that Metternich, with the Kaiser's consent, had been empowered to tell the English that there was no such intention. During the discussions in 1910 for an understanding with England, he had plainly indicated that he was planning a supplementary law for 1912 because he considered the rate of building —two battleships a year—under the old plan, too slow. Hitherto he had not obtained the Kaiser's consent, and it was doubtful if he would get it so long as closer relations with England seemed possible. However, when England sided so definitely with France in the summer of 1911, when the rumour spread that the English fleet had lain to, ready for action, to attack us at the first sign from France, Tirpitz took advantage of the Kaiser's mood and of public opinion to emphasise the fact that England had done all this because our fleet was not strong enough. Under the stimulus of these views the Kaiser remarked on August 21st, of a newspaper report,

> "A better tone towards Germany can only be obtained by a stronger fleet, downright anxiety about which brings the British to an understanding . . . hence we must, by means of a supplementary law, replace the cruisers of the Hansa Class—one every year!"

The proportion of the German to the English navy was to be 2 : 3. The Kaiser's consent had been won in principle to the introduction of the supplementary law. Faber's revelations and the comments of the English press confirmed him in this opinion, and also the reports of the Naval Attaché in London which were in violent opposition to those of the Ambassador. Here we meet again the old familiar themes—England meant to attack us suddenly, to inflict a new Copenhagen on us, while outwardly showing a friendly face; she wanted to prevent the bringing in of a supplementary law so as to save herself from fresh building; but if we refused to be intimidated she would put up with anything we did. The Attaché characterised the new First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, as a danger to Germany.[1]

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[1] Metternich, August 27th, November 1st, 18th, 19th. *Vide* Tirpitz, *Dokumente*, 228, 235, 242 for the last, and also for Metternich's report of November 28th, p. 251.

The Admiralty plan consisted mainly of a great change in organisation through the introduction of a third squadron. Three new battleships, in addition to those already granted, were to be built in the years following and the crews to be considerably increased. When Tirpitz laid his views before the Chancellor, he immediately met with opposition, and ultimately he promised to wait till the Morocco crisis had been completely disposed of. Before meeting the Kaiser the Admiral saw the Chancellor again and explained to him that, if the much sought after agreement with England were not attained, the navy must be increased. Bethmann did not oppose him, evidently hoping that the agreement would yet be realised. On September 26th Tirpitz met the Kaiser at Rominten. He there suggested that in February, 1912, they should frankly propose to England a naval agreement on the proportion of two to three, and in the following winter introduce a law containing within it the German programme for the development of the fleet. If England rejected this proposal she would have to bear the odium of rejecting acceptable conditions for an understanding.[2] The Kaiser instantly approved this idea and wrote to the Imperial Chancellor proposing the overture to England and the postponement of the indispensable law till the following autumn. The Chancellor objected both to the overture to England and to the naval law, and requested further information from the naval authorities. He was also annoyed at Tirpitz in a certain sense attempting to influence foreign policy by his advice to the Kaiser. It must have seemed to him even more disconcerting that Admiral von Heeringen, the chief of the naval staff, in his reply declared that the old margin of safety hitherto accepted in naval matters was no longer adequate. "Our navy, for the maintenance of the standard of its morale as well as for external success, absolutely demands a serviceable military chance against England."[3] It was impossible to foresee what consequences this might entail. Further, Tirpitz now requested—contrary to the proposal submitted at Rominten—that the new naval law should be announced at once. He made this proposal on October 14th to the Kaiser also, who at first agreed to it and even said he would dismiss the Chancellor if he did not introduce the Bill at once, but let himself be persuaded the following day by Bethmann not to bring up the matter in the autumn, but only if necessary and possible in the spring.[1] Again Tirpitz insisted on the increased demand being introduced at once and threatened to resign if this were not done. The Kaiser, in the middle of November, ordered the new Bill to be incorporated in the Budget. Bethmann gave way ; he formed the impression that if he persisted in his refusal the Kaiser would prefer a change of Government.[2] He did not wish things to go that length. He sought to delay matters by calling attention to the financial difficulties, pointed out by Wermuth, the Secretary of State. In this he was supported by Kiderlen, who emphasised its reaction upon our relations with England and requested that decisions of such magnitude should only be taken after full discussion by the responsible leaders of the country's policy. "It is a very serious and fateful moment for our whole future and will require a carefully weighed decision with due consideration for all points of view." [3]

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[1] Reports of the Naval Attaché, October 28th, November 10th and 18th, with marginal comments by the Kaiser. Also Metternich, November 1st. Sir E. Cassel in his letter to Ballin on January 9th, 1912, had a wholly different opinion of Churchill. *Vide* Tirpitz, 229-253.

[2] September 1st. *Vide* Tirpitz, 207-209, 213.

[3] Admiral von Heeringen to the Imperial Chancellor, October 7th. *Vide* Tirpitz, 220.

In order to propitiate the Kaiser, the Chancellor asked Metternich whether it would be possible to obtain from the English Government some tangible sign of friendliness which would go further than mere words and might make a favourable impression on the Kaiser. As a step of this kind he would suggest that on the English side they might revert to the earlier idea of a general political agreement, possibly in the form of an arrangement as to neutrality. He commissioned our Ambassador to feel his way carefully with Sir Edward Grey and find out whether this were feasible (November 22nd).

[1] Cf. Tirpitz's account *Dokumente*, 220-269.

[2] Bethmann to Metternich, November 22nd.

[3] Kiderlen to Jenisch, November 26th. In the first draft of November 25th, the Kaiser was to be directly requested "not to listen to one-sided interested parties, but to consult all his accredited representatives. For at present we are at the parting of the ways and it is too serious to decide such a matter away from the capital without the presence of your Majesty's accredited advisers." These sentences were omitted from the copy sent.

Metternich had a great objection to telling the English frankly that we were again wishing to increase our navy if England would not offer an arrangement for neutrality. He felt that to do so might perhaps lead to strengthening the bonds with France. But if we increased our navy on paper first of all, we must proceed with very great caution if the building was to be carried through without interruption.[1] Metternich's earlier despatches were laid before the Kaiser but made no impression on him. He said it was just 1904 and 1908 over again.

> " Had I followed him then we should have had no fleet at all by now. His deduction permits the interference of a foreign nation in our naval policy and as supreme War Lord and Kaiser that I neither shall nor can allow. And what a humiliation for our people! The supplementary law must be carried out."

On November 27th Grey made a speech in the Commons giving a review of England's attitude during the Morocco crisis which was not free from objection from the German point of view. This speech further embittered the Kaiser, although it expressed a wish for friendly relations with Germany in the future. The Kaiser telegraphed to the Chancellor that in his opinion Grey's speech left things as they were, as there was no indication and no proposal as to how the improvement was to be brought about. " He has disappointed the high expectations of Europe. Result: reinforcements both on land and sea unavoidably necessary." [2] Bethmann agreed that the strengthening of the navy implied that of the army, adding that the Minister of War and the Chief of the General Staff shared this view. He desired to consider the proposal more closely.[3] He sought by insisting strongly on the necessity of increasing the army to delay as much as possible the naval demands. In January, 1912, he again proposed not to incorporate the new naval requirements in a supplementary law but to grant the necessary consent every year. When this was declined Bethmann then pressed at least for a slackening of speed in the building of the three new vessels, to which Tirpitz had finally let himself be beaten down, and sought to postpone his consent, while in the speech from the throne on February 7th, at the opening of the Reichstag, he merely alluded in general terms to future plans for armaments. He was still hoping that England would make an offer sufficiently substantial to placate the Kaiser. However, in his interviews with Grey, Metternich gathered the impression that England would have nothing to do with a political agreement which involved a renunciation of the Entente. ("In that case, there is nothing to be done," was the Kaiser's comment.) On the other hand Grey indicated that he was willing to give us support in developing a future colonial empire in Central Africa. The Ambassador felt that this was intended to mollify us, but gave us no assurance that we should not have English influence against us in European politics. His opinion was that England would nevertheless not be easily persuaded to range herself against us, and that it might be possible to use this frame of mind to our advantage. But if we were again now to increase our fleet and thereby compel England to similar measures and fresh expenditure, any reconciliation would seem impossible and the Entente would probably harden into an actual alliance. The Kaiser remarked on this, "The poor fellow is beyond help! We are not to arm and England will stay good humoured. That is all!"[1]

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[1] Metternich, November 24th.

[2] Kaiser to Bethmann, November 27th.

[3] Bethmann to the Kaiser, November 28th. The Kaiser to Bethmann, November 30th.

In a private letter to Bethmann, Metternich spoke even more plainly. He put the question, would the building of one battleship more per year outweigh the prospect of better terms with England and a favourable colonial agreement? This prospect might not occur again. We might at present secure by amicable means what would only be obtainable otherwise after a severe struggle, the issue of which would be uncertain. If we wished to strengthen the navy, he thought we ought rather to build more submarines and small cruisers. If we strengthened our battlefleet by accelerated building, England would be confirmed in her impression that we were arming for a decisive struggle. "Then she will arm more strongly and war becomes inevitable."[2]

The Chancellor, however, felt Grey's suggestions to be too vague. He instructed Metternich to get more definite offers.

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[1] Metternich, November 28th, with marginal comments by the Kaiser.

[2] Metternich to Bethmann, November 29th.

It was very doubtful if the prospects of a colonial inheritance made greater by England's support would induce the Kaiser to renounce the increase of the navy, but it was worth while trying.[1]

But Metternich's further interviews with Grey and Haldane did not lead to firm proposals. They merely asserted in a general way that they desired better relations: Haldane on one occasion suggested that a personal interview between Grey and Bethmann might prove helpful. The Chancellor again urged further inquiries; all appearance of pressure, or entreaty, or of attempting to break up the Entente, was to be avoided, and every indication of the new navy laws, which the Kaiser still upheld, carefully suppressed. Perhaps the English might tell us what they really wanted of us; then we would state our position and an agreement on a broader basis might be prepared. We were not covetous of more territory, wanted not scraps here and there, but the certainty of not being hampered by England in our colonial expansion. Then too the question of the Bagdad Railway must be finally settled. These matters must be cleared up before the Reichstag reassembled. Metternich replied that there was little hope of all this unless he could define our own colonial requirements accurately. If the supplementary law was to be passed he thought it would be better to postpone the whole matter till after it had become known, because otherwise the negotiations would be interrupted and the relations of the two countries again adversely affected. Bethmann left him to work by his own methods, but cautioned him against any appearance of speaking with official sanction on colonial matters.[2] Neither side, in fact, was prepared to come forward boldly with definite proposals.

On December 30th Metternich discussed with Grey various colonial differences. The Bagdad Railway, South and Central Africa were mentioned without anything definite being proposed by either side. The Kaiser's impression was that no results were to be looked for so long as Grey was in office. Hence ships must be built; it was the only form of 'moral compulsion' to bring England to an understanding with us. He himself was fully persuaded that we should some day be caught unawares by the English fleet attacking us suddenly without any declaration of war. Even the prospect of an extension of our colonial empire did not entice him. He wanted no colonies by England's favour; he had enough, or he could buy or take them without England. She was merely making a present of other people's possessions and involving us in complications so as to be able to partition Asia among the Entente Powers without us. We should then have to force open the door again for our trade. No great questions must be solved without our co-operation. The programme of German policy as formulated by the Imperial Chancellor and approved by himself was as follows: there was to be no detailed agreement before the conclusion of a "political working agreement," which recognised an equality of rights and the establishment of our respective policies on parallel lines. An increased colonial empire without an increased fleet was out of the question; a fleet twice the size would then be necessary. His watchword was always, "Armament proposals stand irrespective of visions of this kind." [1]

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[1] Bethmann to Metternich, December 6th.

[2] Ostertag, Military Attaché, December 12th. Bethmann to Metternich, December 16th and 19th. Metternich, December 18th.

The only result was that a new English memorandum was delivered in Berlin suggesting, without making definite proposals, the resumption of the negotiations, which had been in abeyance since 1911, for the exchange of reports on the naval work under construction.[2] At the same time a more important overture reached Berlin by the unofficial channel already familiar to us, namely through Sir Ernest Cassel and Ballin. The proposal, which was approved by Grey, Lloyd George and Churchill, was that an interview should take place between members of the English Cabinet and the Imperial Chancellor. It contained the following points: 1. England's superiority at sea must be maintained; the German naval programme must not be increased but must be diminished wherever possible. 2. England would support Germany's colonial expansion as much as possible. 3. England was prepared to entertain proposals for an agreement which excluded its participation in all aggressive plans or combinations directed against Germany.

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[1] Metternich, December 30th. Kühlmann, January 4th, 8th, 17th, 1912, with marginal comments by the Kaiser. *Vide* Tirpitz, 269, for the report of January 8th.

[2] English memorandum, January 28th, 1912.

Through the same channel a reply was immediately sent to the effect that this approach was welcome and the programme for negotiations accepted, provided that the proposed estimates for 1912 were ranked as part of the existing German naval programme. The best thing would be if Sir Edward Grey himself visited the Kaiser, who would be very willing to see him.[1]

Metternich on being informed immediately raised objections. It was obvious that England in point (1) wished to exclude a supplementary naval law and Germany wished to secure it; unless it were abandoned no agreement could be reached. The offer in point (3) was worthless so long as the word "aggressive" remained, because the aims of the Entente and the attitude of England in 1909 and 1911 were not regarded as aggressive. It would be better to say: an agreement which excludes England's participation in plans, combinations, and wars directed against Germany. It was very soon evident that Metternich had rightly gauged the situation.

Through Cassel's influence, in the reply to Germany it was suggested that Haldane, the Minister of War, should be sent instead of Grey, and at the same time stress was laid on the fact that the German naval programme should be such as relieved England from further taxation. If this were granted, nothing more would be gained by negotiations. In a private conversation Sir Ernest Cassel told an intimate friend of Ballin that a political agreement might procure for Germany all that France and Russia had, but no more. The main thing was for Haldane to find out if there was really a sincere desire at Berlin for friendly negotiation.[2] After what had already passed, that could only signify whether Berlin was willing to renounce the navy law. Bethmann replied that provided England were willing to accept a political agreement as amended by Metternich in point (3), an understanding on the armaments question might quite well be possible.

Was he therefore prepared to drop the supplementary law for the navy? Had the Kaiser sanctioned this? A telegram from the Chancellor to Metternich the same day gives us the answer.

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[1] Sir E. Cassel's letter submitted and answered, January 29th. Metternich's opinion, January 31st. Cf. Hulvermann, *Ballin*, 248.

[2] Note in Huldermann (February 5th and 6th), *Ballin*, 252.

He considers it very improbable that Grey will consent to our political demands, and hence wishes to make sure that the failure of the negotiations cannot be attributed by England to our unyielding attitude on the question of the navy. The Kaiser was informed, but not Tirpitz. "His Majesty," telegraphed the Chancellor, "does not wish that the Admiralty in the meantime should know anything about the negotiations." Evidently this was Bethmann's wish.

Metternich again sent warning that the English Cabinet was only in favour of an understanding provided we renounced the supplementary law for the navy, and wherever possible reduced the estimates. That we would not do; hence we were revolving in a vicious circle with no prospect of success.[1]

Haldane came to Berlin; Cassel accompanied him to confer with him behind the scenes, and Ballin was present in the same capacity. What was he sent to do? Was he merely an emissary who had come to reconnoitre and find out what Germany was really planning, or was he really empowered to make serious and definite offers? Only the English archives can clear up this point. Grey, in reply to a query from the Russian Ambassador, said that Haldane was to tell Berlin what was being thought about the armaments question in England and to carry back to London *ad referendum* the reply given to him. If the Chancellor raised other questions he was to listen and report. It is safe to conclude from this only that Grey wished to present the mission in this harmless light to the Russians, and not that things actually fell out like that. The later English memorandum to Germany, of March 25th, stated that Haldane had gone with full knowledge of the views of the Cabinet for frank statement and discussion, but without authority to conclude binding agreements, and that he had at once said so. This is confirmed by a note of Sir Ernest Cassel which was communicated to the Kaiser. It is therein stated, "It has been decided by the Cabinet that Haldane's visit is merely to serve to find out how things are tending and that if he sees the path open for unity, Grey and Winston Churchill will also come to Berlin."[2]

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[1] Cassel, February 4th. Bethmann's reply, February 4th, *vide* Tirpitz, 280. Bethmann to Metternich, February 4th and 8th. Metternich, February 5th.

[2] For text of this report, *vide* Tirpitz, 281.

On February 8th Haldane conferred with Bethmann; on the 9th with the Kaiser and Tirpitz, without the Chancellor being present; and on the 10th again with Bethmann.[1] It was a very remarkable allotment of rôles; after a political understanding and an agreement on the naval question had been regarded by us as in the closest interdependence, the political and military parts of the understanding were now being handled by various personages who did not agree among themselves, and had not sufficiently thought out a common course of action. It was equally remarkable that Kiderlen, the Secretary of State and the official leader of our foreign policy, who was then in Stuttgart on leave, received no information.[2]

The first meeting served merely for a general survey. The second dealt mainly with colonial and marine questions and led to the result that the Kaiser declared himself ready, if a political agreement was reached, and as soon as it was published, to renounce the building of a new battleship for 1912 and to delay the proposed three new ships till 1913, 1916, and 1919. Tirpitz consented to this concession, which amounted to very little. In his memoirs he says he would have renounced the entire supplementary law had England offered a binding political agreement, but that he had given no indication of this as there would still have been time enough later on. He failed to realise that very frequently a timely offer influences decisively the course of negotiations. If he had concluded from the discussion that Haldane would prefer not merely to set aside the whole supplementary law, but also to reduce the programme as laid down in the old naval law, he would no doubt have been right. The question was only how far England would bind herself, and there could be no clearness about this, because the possibility of renouncing the supplementary law, or, what was more, a part of the earlier law, was instantly rejected.

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[1] For what follows; Siebert, 738. Bethmann to Metternich, February 8th. Ballin to the Kaiser, February 8th. The Kaiser to Bethmann, February 9th. Bethmann's draft of the treaty, February 10th. Bethmann's note, February 12th. Cf. also the various memoirs of Bethmann, Tirpitz, Haldane, Ballin. A critical revision of the whole of the material is still required.

[2] Jäckh, ii. 155. It was at the Imperial Chancellor's wish that the Kaiser himself conducted the negotiations on the technical naval questions. Cf. the Kaiser's letter to Kiderlen on February 24th. The discussion betweenTirpitz and Bethmann, as well as between the Kaiser and Bethmann, before Haldane's visit had evidently only led superficially to unity (*vide* Tirpitz, 282-284). When Tirpitz declares (Tirpitz, 286) that he would have been willing to withdraw the entire naval law had England been sufficiently conciliatory, and that the Kaiser knew this, it is only fair to add that this statement receives no confirmation in the reports on the matter and is scarcely compatible with the attitude of the Kaiser and the Admiral.

In the last interview Bethmann, who only now was informed of the final shape taken by the demands of the German Admiralty, sought to work out with Haldane a clear definition of the political agreement. The Chancellor wanted a promise of benevolent neutrality and of help in localising the conflict so far as possible, in the event of one of the Powers being involved in war with one or several opponents ; Haldane considered that this was going too far. The most he would promise was that neither of the contracting Powers should make an unprovoked attack on the other, nor join any coalition which intended to attack the other, nor take part in plans and undertakings with these aims in view. That, however, did not satisfy the Chancellor ; even Haldane admitted that this pledge was not sufficient. Finally it was decided to find a new formula. Haldane then revived the question of renouncing the construction of a new battleship in 1913 also, so that there would be no further increase in the old programme of construction till 1916 ; he thought that by then general relations might have improved so much that nothing further need be done. He doubted if the evidence of goodwill shown by Tirpitz, *i.e.* the postponement from 1912 to 1913, would satisfy the Cabinet. The Chancellor was not in a position to give a definite answer to this, which, he added, was a purely technical matter. Haldane also remarked that if Germany did extend her programme England would be compelled to build double the number of new ships laid down by Germany.

As regards the colonies, Haldane declared that England had no objection to our obtaining from Portugal the larger part of Angola and possibly also a share of the Belgian Congo. He further indicated the cession of Zanzibar and Pemba to Germany as possible in the event of a satisfactory arrangement being come to with regard to the final sector of the Bagdad Railway. The more specific proposals on the latter subject, formulated by Bethmann, he made a note of in order to lay them before the Cabinet, but did not himself express any opinion as to their acceptance. On the other hand the Portuguese share of Timor was to fall to England.

The course of these discussions reveals plainly that Metternich was right when he wrote that unless the supplementary law were renounced absolutely nothing would happen. Haldane took back with him a copy of the naval law and the meagre concession of delaying its execution for one year, and the drafts for a political and a colonial agreement on the most important points of which no settlement had been reached. As already mentioned, we do not know what actual concessions might perhaps have been offered had we abandoned the entire supplementary law or even consented to some modification of the earlier one. Certainly nothing that would have imperilled the existence of the Entente.[1]

While these negotiations were proceeding in Berlin, on February 9th Churchill made a tactless speech at Glasgow which culminated in the assertion that for England a strong fleet was a necessity, for Germany more or less of a superfluous luxury. Naturally such words from one of the most influential members of the Cabinet did not tend to improve matters. Metternich remained sceptical even after having spoken himself to Haldane. But he made some attempts at improving the suggested proposals, such as including the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands in the scheme of distribution, allotting one of these groups to Germany, the other to England. He again advised delaying new construction for three years in order to make sure of the colonial agreement. Haldane had told him that if the negotiations developed favourably either he or Grey would return to Berlin at the conclusion.[2] Probably Haldane imagined that in Berlin they would renounce the supplementary law in its entirety if the colonial agreement proved satisfactory.

Eight days later Haldane informed the Ambassador that the whole question was being discussed in the Cabinet. Some small difficulties in regard to colonial matters had cropped up, for instance, the fact that Holland had the right of pre-emption in Timor had been overlooked. A careful revision of the naval supplementary law by the Admiralty had brought out the fact that not only were the new battleships referred to in Berlin provided for, but at the same time there was a much greater state of preparedness in the whole navy and a corresponding increase in personnel, which warranted the conclusion that other new formations were planned. Also the number of minor craft asked for exceeded the proportion of what had been expected in England. In any case England would greatly augment her plans of construction and would be obliged to introduce new and heavy expenditure into her Budget. If this happened, important agreements with Germany in other matters, such as were in prospect, could scarcely be carried through. The political formula was then discussed, Haldane remarking that more depended on the restoration of confidence than on the actual words.

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[1] On his return from Stuttgart, Kiderlen again sought to induce the Admiral to renounce the entire naval law, because that was the only condition on which a valuable political understanding could be reached with England. Tirpitz disputed this, as Haldane had expressed himself satisfied with a reduction in the rate of building, and in this the Kaiser agreed with him. *Vide* Tirpitz, 290, for report on his conversation with Kiderlen, February 22nd. The Kaiser to Kiderlen, February 24th, *loc. cit.* 292, and Jäckh, ii. 155. Kiderlen to the Kaiser, February 24th, Jäckh, ii. 157.

[2] Metternich, February 15th.

Grey had further objections to offer after he had talked with the Colonial Secretary. He declared that the cession of Zanzibar and Pemba did not depend only on an understanding being arrived at on the question of the Bagdad Railway but also on a settlement of the naval estimates. Hence he judged it better to discuss the latter point and the general neutrality agreement and postpone the colonial difficulties till later.[1]

The Kaiser and the Chancellor regarded this as a withdrawal on England's part from the basis agreed upon in Berlin, a repudiation of Haldane. The latter had neither protested against the increase of personnel by the supplementary law nor against the conclusion at the same time of a binding colonial agreement. There is no doubt that they attributed too great significance to the very guarded remarks of the Minister of War. Also Haldane saw the supplementary law at Berlin for the first time and could only read it through quickly. The English Ministers were even more prudent when their experts told them that the naval law had a much wider application than had been conjectured from previous general statements. Moreover, Tirpitz denied that the increase of personnel was intended for any other purpose than was clearly expressed in the law itself.[1]

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[1] Metternich, February 22nd, 24th, and March 1st. *Vide* Tirpitz, 296, 302, 308. Cf. Grey's memorandum of February 24th; Tirpitz, 304.

In a German memorandum of March 5th attention was drawn to the fact that, owing to the last communications, the basis of the negotiations had been altered, whereas Germany was resolved to adhere to the basis agreed upon with Haldane. We were even prepared not to fix a particular year for laying down the third of the new battleships which according to the naval law was to be built in 1919.

While the Chancellor wanted to wait for notice of the receipt of this memorandum before publicly announcing the armament proposals (including the naval demands), the Kaiser became impatient; he not only ordered the announcement to be made the following day, but declared if this were not done he would have it published by the Minister of War and the Secretary of State for the Navy. He telegraphed at the same time to Metternich in London threatening to mobilise if England withdrew any ships from the Mediterranean to the North Sea. The Chancellor thereupon, he could not do otherwise, tendered his resignation (March 8th). He declared he could not bear the weight of the responsibility for measures of this kind which might lead to war. "If war were forced upon us," he wrote, "we should fight and with God's help should not be defeated. But to provoke a war without our honour or our vital interests being attacked I should consider a sin against the destiny of Germany, even although, according to human calculations, we might hope for complete victory." As even the Kaiser did not want to provoke war but had thrown out his threat in a moment of passionate anger, he let himself be persuaded into assuming an attitude wholly favourable to peace and further to an understanding with England, greatly to the Chancellor's relief. He even held out a prospect of delaying the completion of the first two ships and thereby induced Bethmann to remain in office. To this last concession Tirpitz had strong objections and threatened to resign. The Kaiser thereupon withdrew his promise and Bethmann acquiesced.[2]

Meanwhile the discussions continued in London. Haldane declared that he had not commented at Berlin on the increase of personnel because he did not know about it. Grey denied any change of English intentions ; the technical discussions could not upset the Government programme which was aiming at an agreement with Germany. But even should this not be realised, Haldane's visit to Berlin and the confidential exchange of views which had taken place would nevertheless lead to a permanent improvement in relations.[1] On the receipt of this communication the Imperial Chancellor drew up a programme for his own guidance. He professed his willingness to continue these confidential relations even though they did not lead to a treaty, if England reciprocated the confidence. He could not understand why England was so much opposed to the political agreement. "I am ready to accept the Haldane formula if it is agreed in addition that in the event of threatening complications with other States, there should be a thorough discussion beforehand with the partner." If England declines any formula, that will confirm the suspicion that she only began negotiations in order to interfere with the supplementary law.[2]

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[1] Marginal comments by the Kaiser on Metternich's despatches. Bethmann's note, February 28th. The Kaiser to Bethmann, February 26th.

[2] Cf. text of this document in Tirpitz, 317 and Jäckh, ii. 158.

On March 8th the first information in Germany about the contents of the naval proposals was published in the *Kölnische Zeitung*. In London this was regarded as an indication that no further vital change was to be made in the law, and the English Government became consequently more rigid both in colonial and general matters. The Secretary of State for the Colonies declared that Haldane had not received authority to make definite promises in this field.[3] On March 14th Grey made his last proposal for an agreement :

> "England will make no unprovoked attack on Germany nor associate herself with such, nor pursue an aggressive policy towards her. An attack on Germany is not the object, and forms no part of any treaty, understanding or combination to which England at the present time is a party ; and she will not agree to any arrangement having such for aim."

The clause suggested by Metternich—"England will therefore naturally observe a benevolent neutrality should Germany be forced into war"—was declined by the Cabinet, as was also the addition Bethmann had previously desired to add to Haldane's formula. As Germany was again strengthening her navy, said Grey, England could not imperil her old friendships. "A direct neutrality agreement would inevitably offend French susceptibilities." He was firmly convinced that no difficulties would arise so long as Bethmann was Chancellor; but he had to remember that some other personality might become leader. Therefore he could not risk the friendship with France and find himself some day fallen between two stools. For the restoration of confidential relations the proposed formula was sufficient. The intention of remaining neutral in the event of an unprovoked attack was quite sufficiently obvious. "His policy of no longer dividing Europe into two camps would in time bear fruit." In colonial matters he was ready to continue negotiations.

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[1] Metternich, March 6th and 7th.

[2] Bethmann's note, March 8th.

[3] Metternich, March 11th.

At the same time Churchill told the Ambassador plainly that as the German law compelled England to face fresh and heavy expenditure it would be difficult to effect anything. To Ballin he declared that the continual competition in armaments was bound to lead to war within the next two years.[1] On the following day, March 18th, in the House of Commons, he made an important speech in which he declared that England must have permanently a superiority of 60 per cent. in battleships, but that it would be best and perfectly practicable if England as well as Germany dropped all construction of new vessels for one year. That would leave the situation unaltered, would allow both parties to effect large economies, Germany the cost of three battleships, England of five. That would be advantageous for Germany, for should war actually break out she could not expect that three of her ships would outclass five English ships. Such an agreement would not impair in any wise the freedom of both Powers, and the rivalry on sea would be allayed for the time being. This proposal was not, however, made officially.

Shortly before this the Imperial Chancellor had begged the Kaiser to defer publishing the supplementary law till it was evident how England would act in the question of the political agreement, so as not to put any obstacle unnecessarily in its way.[2]

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[1] Metternich, March 14th and 17th. Bethmann to the Kaiser, March 17th.

[2] Bethmann to the Kaiser, March 15th. Cf. Jagow's note of December 10th, 1916.

He was evidently determined, if the text of it were accepted by the English, to request a reduction of the naval demands and to make consent to this a Cabinet question. He must have felt all the more disappointed by Metternich's despatch of March 17th. He submitted it to the Kaiser, whose indignation was unbounded when he read that in England Bethmann's personality was regarded as the one surety for peace.

> "Never in my life have I heard of an agreement being concluded with only one particular statesman, independent of the reigning Sovereign. From the above it is clear that Grey has no idea who really is master here and that it is I who rule. He already tells me who my Minister is to be in the event of my concluding an agreement with England."

He himself immediately drafted instructions for Metternich, blaming him principally for having passed on Grey's proposal. The English Government had thereby abandoned the basis of negotiations proposed by Haldane and had wrecked the agreement. Hence a new basis must now be found for negotiations. An offensive and defensive alliance to include France might answer the purpose. He told the Imperial Chancellor his aim was to put England in the wrong if she declined this proposal. The Chancellor could not prevent the sending of this letter of instructions, but at the same time he forwarded to London an explanatory statement giving a very different impression. Only a settlement in the nature of a defensive treaty would make it possible for him to advise the Kaiser to abandon the vital points of the naval law. In the Kaiser's peaceful intentions lay the best guarantee for Germany's future policy. But he must know what reductions would satisfy England.[1] Recognising, however, from a further detailed despatch received meanwhile from the Ambassador, that the latter considered that nothing could be gained without the repudiation of the entire law, he ordered him to drop the matter for the time being (March 18th). He thereafter wrote to Ballin that he was convinced the problem was "inherently insoluble."

On the 20th Metternich had another interview with Grey, who remarked that he did not see why Germany required stronger guarantees than France and Russia, with whom there had been much more acute questions at issue. Hitherto only Japan had been conceded more. Was he to conclude that in the event of the agreement not taking place, Germany no longer attached any value to good relations? He was ready to negotiate further on colonial matters and, once the feeling roused by the naval question had died down, for an agreement as well. To this Metternich was instructed to reply that of course good relations—on both sides—ought to continue even without an agreement. On the conclusion of a treaty of neutrality, however, some modification of the naval law might be considered. But England was only anxious to limit our armaments, not to fetter herself, and, according to Churchill's statements, contemplated new increases if any other Power strengthened its war equipment.[1]

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[1] Kaiser's telegram to Metternich, March 18th. Despatch to Metternich, March 18th and 19th. Cp. also letters from the Kaiser and Bethmann to Ballin on March 18th (Huldermann, 266); and the draft of a letter from the Kaiser to King George, March 8th (Tirpitz, 331).

Once more Metternich sought to have the German formula accepted by Grey, who submitted the report to the Cabinet. The Ambassador thought that if the Cabinet accepted our version, it would insist on excluding for both parties and for the duration of the agreement any extension of the previous plans of naval construction, and this meant that the German supplementary law would be given up absolutely. Bethmann replied that less depended on the text than on the contents of the agreement; the more accommodating England showed herself, the better the prospect of a reduction of the German naval programme.

On March 29th Grey informed Count Metternich that the Cabinet had decided not to go beyond the formula as previously defined by England. The Ambassador then announced "that the Imperial Government failed to see in the English formula for the agreement the conditions which would lead to the favourable result desired by Sir Edward Grey."[2] To avoid severing communications altogether, the proposal was revived as to the possibility of a periodical exchange of information on the progress of the ships under construction, and the discussion of colonial questions—the African colonies, the Bagdad Railway, Persia—was continued in the hope that an understanding on special points might prepare the ground for a comprehensive agreement later on.[1] But on the German side the negotiations for a treaty of neutrality and for a reduction of the fleet were now considered to have failed. On April 15th the naval supplementary law, along with a proposal for increasing the land army, was submitted to the Reichstag, and on 14th May it was accepted.

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[1] Metternich, March 20th. Bethmann to Metternich, March 21st.

[2] Metternich, March 29th.

The Kaiser came to the conclusion that it would have been better not to have broached the matter. He had been perfectly right at the outset in wanting to publish the supplementary law at once; his diplomatists had put obstacles in the way, having themselves been deceived and dazzled by England by means of the mirage of a colonial empire in Africa. It was to be hoped they would learn their lesson and pay more attention to his wishes in the future, especially when it concerned England, which he knew how to handle better than they did. He had at once suspected that Haldane was merely wanting to lure us on to renounce the naval law in order to strengthen the position of the English Government at home, and he had spoiled his sport for him.[2] These expressions resemble even in details the turns of speech employed by Tirpitz in his *Recollections*, and afford clear evidence of the source from which they come. They do not correspond with the facts, for originally the Kaiser certainly believed in the honesty of Haldane's intentions. Tirpitz strengthened the Kaiser's idea that the English had tried to influence him in the choice of his Ministers, and that his Ambassador had failed in his duty in not repudiating this suggestion with sufficient vigour. For a long time past Tirpitz had been trying to discredit Metternich's information and efficiency by means of the conflicting reports of the Naval Attaché, which were addressed direct to the Kaiser. Metternich's removal was now decided on and was soon afterwards carried out.

On reviewing the whole course of events there is scarcely any doubt of the fact that England was only prepared to make tangible concessions in colonial matters if an understanding were reached on naval matters which would relieve her of fresh expenditure, *i.e.* the repeal of the supplementary law. Haldane had not expressly said this in Berlin, but he had let it be clearly understood. The Kaiser and the Imperial Chancellor had not realised it, although from the beginning Metternich had supplied them with a correct commentary on the English procedure. A declaration of neutrality in accordance with Grey's vague formula would perhaps have been possible even without renouncing the supplementary law. But no value would have been attached to it on our side because it did not offer sufficient guarantees. Would the formula proposed by Bethmann have offered a higher guarantee of security? The question whether a war were forced upon us or we were involved in an unprovoked attack was so complicated that a completely unequivocal response by all the participants at the outbreak of a conflict would be out of the question. England, therefore, was always perfectly free to challenge the validity of these assertions, thereby escaping her obligation to observe neutrality. But again the question arises whether the conclusion and publication of an agreement even in so vague a form might not have exercised a powerful influence on the public opinion of both countries and have contributed to a closer relationship. The adjustment of various isolated conflicting interests, which Bethmann subsequently recognised as the right way, might have been attempted. When we see with what anxiety and solicitude the Russian and French Ambassadors in London followed these negotiations, we are obliged to conclude that even such a loosely drafted agreement would have been highly distasteful to them. Moreover, on March 15th Grey had communicated the formula proposed by him to the Russians and also to the French, so that their apprehensions might be set at rest as to any ulterior motives in these negotiations. Poincaré thereupon remarked, so he assured Iswolski, that "the English signature to any such treaty with Germany would at once put an end to the present Anglo-French relations."[1]

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[1] German note to England, April 5th.

[2] Kaiser's comment on the English memorandum of March 31st.

So far as one can judge hitherto, the real significance of the failure of these negotiations lies in the fact that in England people were now definitely convinced that it was not possible to compass a reduction of naval armaments in Germany by means of an agreement. The same attempt had been made in 1908, and had been wrecked by the same difficulties. The fact had to be faced that within measurable time Germany would again be undertaking further increases and that the same situation would keep on recurring. England must either saddle herself with highly burdensome taxation, or else undertake negotiations with Germany for colonial concessions and political obligations of a general kind and of dangerous extent, as equivalent services. This time, indeed, these had been demanded in return not for the abandonment of the supplementary law but for a slackening merely in the rate of building. One sign of this feeling in England was the increase in declarations about the desirability of forcibly putting an end to the German fleet, whether by beginning a war for this sole object, or at least by welcoming it if the occasion for it were given by a quarrel between Germany and one of the powers friendly to England.

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[1] Iswolski's dispatch, December 5th, 1912. *Livre noir*, i. 362. Stieve, *Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, ii. 374.

During these negotiations, an embittered struggle had developed between the leading authorities of the German Empire, which exposed with the utmost clearness the growing jealousy of the administrative departments and the total lack of unity in the conduct of German policy. In the acrimonious contest between Tirpitz on the one side and the Chancellor and his colleagues on the other, the Admiral had finally emerged victorious. Under threats of resignation from both leaders, the Kaiser had been uncertain and wavering, but at length, when the diplomatists failed to bring about a political agreement with England, he felt confirmed in the (to him) congenial belief that the military had better judgment even in political matters, and that the civilians, the Chancellor included, were really no use whatever.

Immediately after the failure of the negotiations Count Metternich withdrew into retirement (May 9th). He had long been considered by the Kaiser, and still more by Tirpitz, too friendly to England ; and he himself had for years past been dissatisfied with the policy of his Government, which he considered misguided. In England his departure was sincerely regretted. Sir Edward Grey paid him the unusual distinction of publicly expressing this regret in the House of Commons. His successor was the seventy-year old Freiherr von Marschall, who was considered the most capable of the German diplomatists. He was thus for the third time singled out to play an important role in German policy.

From 1890 till 1897, when Secretary of State, he had been involved in the *rapprochement* with England and in the hostile mood which followed, and towards the close of this period he had advocated an unfriendly policy towards England. As Ambassador in Constantinople from 1897 to 1912 he had zealously promoted a friendly German policy towards Turkey, had made the completion of the Bagdad railway one of his main objectives, and had vigorously prosecuted a more active German policy in the Near East, highly obnoxious to England and Russia. The whole of the disastrous idea of a secret alliance between Germany and the Islamic world, which had a sinister influence even on the Morocco question, was due to him. It is hard to say what was expected by sending such a man to London at such a time. Perhaps it was thought that the reports of a diplomatist who could not be reckoned a special friend of England might provide more reliable information than those of Metternich as to whether attempts at a *rapprochement* in the future had any prospects at all. But Herr von Marschall was not destined to exercise his gifts in this new sphere. He died in August, 1912, and his place was filled by Prince Lichnowsky, who was chosen with the expressed intention of creating as good relations as possible with the English Court and aristocracy. The first Balkan War had just broken out, and co-operation with England was urgently necessary in order to prevent the outbreak of a world war.

# XVI. THE BALKAN WARS

After prolonged endeavours Russia had succeeded in establishing the league of Balkan States under her protection as she had so long desired. On March 13th, 1912, Serbia and Bulgaria concluded a secret treaty for mutual defence against any attack, and for the prevention of even a temporary occupation of Turkish territory by one of the Great Powers. In a supplementary treaty it was agreed to notify Russia immediately in case both States felt convinced that military measures were necessary. If they differed in their opinion on the matter, the Czar was to decide. If one State only was involved, the other was to remain neutral, but to hold herself in readiness in case a third Power joined in the attack. All territory conquered in common was to be administered in common, and only to be partitioned after the conclusion of peace. Only an approximate frontier line was agreed upon, the final decision in every difference of opinion as to the ultimate boundary line resting again with the Czar, whose consent was to be requested for the whole treaty. This was granted, and on March 30th the Russian Government communicated the leading contents of this treaty to England and to France. In August it was supplemented by a military convention.[1]

The inclusion of Greece in the Balkan League did not take place till May 29th, when a treaty was concluded with Bulgaria for the mutual defence and support of their compatriots under Turkish sovereignty. It also was supplemented by a military convention. In St. Petersburg they were under no illusion as to the deep-seated distrust, as prevalent now as before, among these allied States.

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[1] *Vide* Boghitchetvitch, 129, also Siebert, 520 f. Sazonoff to Iswolski, March 30th, Stieve, ii. 76.

When Nikita of Montenegro wanted to attack the Turks early in 1912, he was summoned by the Czar and categorically ordered to keep the peace. But when in April fresh disturbances broke out in Albania and Macedonia, these were fomented in spite of all from Montenegro. Weakened by internal dissensions, Turkey was unable to restore order, and in August was forced to grant the Albanians the right to carry arms and to allow them a certain measure of autonomy. They were not satisfied with this, however, and put forward new and greater demands. In spite of the admonitions of the Powers, Montenegro joined actively in these struggles. Turkey mobilised, the three allied Balkan States did likewise, and everywhere the feeling grew that a Balkan War, on a big scale, was unavoidable.

Throughout the summer of 1912 European diplomacy was oppressed by the fear of the incalculable consequences of a conflagration in the Balkans. While the other Great Powers sought to avert it, Russia's attitude, in spite of all her assurances that she was seeking to hold back the Balkan States, gave rise to the suspicion that she wanted war here.[1] Nevertheless there was much that was calculated to give pause to Russian statesmen. There was a lack of complete agreement among the Entente Powers as to the future apportioning of Turkish territory. England and France were anxious above all to keep clear of Balkan affairs; moreover Russia herself was not fully ready for war, and no one knew how far the struggle might spread. How much they were reckoning at St. Petersburg on a general entanglement as a result of the Balkan disturbance is seen from the army order issued by the Czar on the conclusion of the Balkan League, whereby the order for mobilisation in the European districts of Russia was to be regarded as an order for the opening of hostilities against Austria and Germany.[2]

Much the greatest difficulty was the future of Constantinople and the Straits. Russia was aware that Bulgaria had designs on Constantinople. In St. Petersburg they were not ready to allow the Straits, so vitally important to Russia, to pass into the keeping of one of the lesser Balkan Powers. But as it was doubtful, on the other hand, if Russia herself would be allowed by the other Powers, especially by her allies France and England, to occupy Constantinople, and whether the possession of such an advanced outpost might not constitute a strategical weakness rather than a source of strength, Russia hoped that a remnant of Turkish sovereignty in Europe might still be preserved. Both the Greeks and the Bulgarians were clearly told that the valley of the Maritza, according to Russia's intention, would form the new Turkish frontier, and that Turkey would keep Adrianople. But Russia could not be certain that Bulgaria, in the event of victory, might not seek to occupy and retain Constantinople. King Ferdinand's visit to Vienna and Berlin in June was regarded with the greatest suspicion, because it was feared that he would attempt to secure the consent of the Central Powers to more extensive plans.

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[1] Cf. F. Stieve, *Iswolski und der Weltkrieg*, 86.

[2] *Vide* text of the army order of March 12th, Count M. Montgelas, *Leitfaden zur Kriegsschuldfrage*, 37. Cp. the new corresponding order of September 30th, immediately before the outbreak of the first Balkan War, which, according to General Dobrorolski's evidence, was given in the expectation that a general war would develop out of this Balkan war, *loc. cit.* p. 188.

The awkward part for Russia was the difficulty of finding out exactly how the opening up of the Straits problem would be treated by England and France. It was known that Grey wished, if the *status quo* could no longer be maintained, to have the Straits declared neutral, whereas Russia was constantly striving to secure a regulation closing the Black Sea to foreign warships and allowing free entrance and exit to her ships exclusively. Since February the Foreign Office in France had been under the control of Poincaré, who sought to weld the alliance with Russia as closely as possible, because the *revanche*, the fundamental idea of his whole policy, could be realised only with Russia's help. The relations between the two countries had been further strengthened by the conclusion (July 16th) of a naval convention in addition to the previous military convention. But this matter of the Straits presented difficulties even to Poincaré, for a great amount of French capital was invested in Turkey, a fact which was not without its influence on the French Government.

There was another factor in the problem. A Balkan war might easily lead to an Austro-Russian war and that in turn to a general European war. In that case St. Petersburg would be absolutely sure of France's help as soon as Germany entered the arena. During the summer of 1912 Poincaré had repeatedly assured the Russians of this in the most explicit language, and had even added that the French military authorities considered the prospects of such a war favourable. He certainly also said that if Russia were involved in conflicts in the Balkans with Austria-Hungary, and Germany did not intervene, public opinion in France would not justify active participation in such a struggle. Nevertheless the probability was that Germany would be drawn in if a conflict started, and therefore this condition did not carry much weight.

The case with England was different. Would England render military assistance if war broke out over the Balkan difficulties? That was the question that Poincaré and Sazonoff anxiously discussed when the former visited St. Petersburg in August. They decided to sound Grey, but could not draw from him any definite answer. He always maintained that England's attitude would depend on circumstances and that the question of war or peace would be decided by public opinion.[1] It must be borne in mind that public opinion in England, which was wholeheartedly in favour of peace, would protest vigorously against any incitement to a breach of it by Russia, in which case it would not be possible to get Parliament's consent to active co-operation for which there was no binding treaty obligation. How earnestly Sir Edward Grey sought to avert a general conflict is seen from the fact that he constantly met Russia's persistent pressure for intervention by the Entente between Italy and Turkey by the counter proposal that Germany and Austria should also take part in the negotiations. Later on he sought to inaugurate common proceedings by the five Powers, declaring that it was necessary under all circumstances to avoid these dangerous questions being approached by the Triple Alliance and the Entente as if they were two mutually exclusive entities, because that would add enormously to the danger of a military conflict. Under these circumstances Poincaré in June proposed a conference of the Great Powers at which the problems of Tripoli and the Straits were to be discussed. He held that the Entente Governments ought previously to declare that they themselves were not striving for any territorial increase in the Balkan Peninsula and that they should request the same declaration from the other Great Powers. But to this Sazonoff would not agree, because that might be interpreted to mean that Russia renounced the policy she had pursued for centuries in the Balkans.[1] The formula was then watered down so much that it ceased to have any value, and the idea itself collapsed when Italy and Turkey refused to have their dispute settled by a conference.

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[1] Sazonoff's report, August, 1912. Siebert, 793. Iswolski's reports, September 12th and December 5th, 1912. *Livre noir*, i. 323 f. and 362 f., and Stieve ii. 249 and 374.

Naturally enough in Berlin they realised the dangers that lurked behind these Balkan questions. An attempt was made first to get into touch with Russia. On July 4th and 5th the Kaiser and the Czar, accompanied by their leading statesmen, met at Baltic Port.[2] The meeting was much more cordial than any previous one. The Imperial Chancellor afterwards proceeded to St. Petersburg, and for three days discussed with Sazonoff, Kokovzeff, and other Ministers the various questions in dispute. Sazonoff expressly declared that there was no intention to take advantage of Turkey's temporary embarassments; Russia's mission towards the Christian populations of the Balkan States was closed. If Germany and Russia stood loyally by one another, the world was safe. He considered it would be a good thing if the Sovereigns met regularly, perhaps every two years; the whole world would be the gainer. Bethmann on his part assured him that Germany had no intention of alienating Russia from the Entente, but he considered it both possible and desirable, in spite of the existence of the Entente and the Triple Alliance, to have friendly relations with Russia as well as with England. It was not good for Europe to be split up into two hostile camps. Finally, Austria was mentioned. The Imperial Chancellor asserted that in Vienna they only wanted to maintain the *status quo* in the Balkans and had no aggressive plans in view. When Sazonoff remarked that it was to be hoped Germany would not encourage such, Bethmann replied that no support had ever gone from Berlin. Sazonoff thereupon said that he had no anxiety so long as the Emperor Francis Joseph lived, but that he had not the same confidence in his successor, though he hoped he would not pursue some break-neck policy. Bethmann supported him in these views. The Czar spoke somewhat sharply about France.

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[1] Sazonoff's telegram to Iswolski, June 18th. *Livre noir*, i. 273. Stieve, ii. 153.

[2] Bethmann's note, July 4th and 5th. Bethmann to the Foreign Office, July 9th. Pourtalès, July 19th.

Sazonoff's attitude throughout this meeting was undoubtedly not honest. He refrained from telling his so-called friends of the existence of the Balkan League. Shortly before he had also been silent about a naval convention, signed on July 16th, between Russia and France, providing for a regular exchange of information between the naval staffs of both Powers. Later on when some word of this became public and the Central Powers made enquiries, the replies from Paris were evasive, while Sazonoff sought to represent the treaty as quite harmless.[1] Shortly before the meeting the Russian Minister had assured France and England that nothing would happen there that could injure the Entente. He merely wanted to find out what Germany knew about Austria's intentions and how she would act with regard to them.

Not long afterwards Poincaré appeared at St. Petersburg. The possibility of drawing Italy closer to the Entente was discussed and it was agreed to restrain the Balkan States from an attack. Nevertheless Poincaré was convinced, so he wrote to Paris, that these efforts were futile. He bluntly characterised the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty, the complete text of which he seems only then to have learned, as an "instrument of war." It is highly significant that in spite of this he did not seek to have it modified. Probably Poincaré had already given the promise to increase the fighting forces of France to their utmost limit by the introduction of the three years' military service. In any case he urged the Russians to proceed more quickly with the construction of the railway lines to their western frontiers and assured them that England, by a verbal agreement, had pledged herself to aid France in the event of her being attacked by Germany, by landing an army of 100,000 men. They were to be sent to Belgium "in order to ward off the advance of the German army into France through Belgium as expected by the French General

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[1] Pourtalès, August 7th, 8th, 9th.

Staff."[1] At the same time he pressed for an Anglo-Russian naval convention. In addition a request was made for the recall of the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg, Georges Louis, for which Iswolski had long been scheming, as Louis was too peace-loving. A few weeks later Austria proposed that the Great Powers should together discuss the Balkan question and advise Turkey to extend the reforms granted to Albania to all the other Christian nations in the Balkans, and at the same time warn the smaller States against attacking (August 13th). In order to keep right with Germany Count Berchtold met Bethmann at Buchlau on September 7th and 8th.[2] Acting in concert with Kiderlen, the Secretary of State, the Chancellor resolved to leave his Austrian colleague under no doubt that Germany was not prepared to play the rôle of "Austria's satellite in the East." We must be notified previously of every step they planned; if that were not done then we were free to act independently of our ally in special questions, regrettable as that would be. We should not always, as heretofore, support Austria's plans, even beyond our treaty engagements. We must, for instance, know whether treaties had been signed in Vienna with Roumania containing conditions overstepping the stipulations of the existing treaties. These urgent admonitions, which Kiderlen subsequently repeated, were not without their influence on Austria's attitude during the Balkan War.

As the tension in the Balkan States was bringing war constantly nearer, Sazonoff at the end of September set out for London, Paris and Berlin to gather information and discuss the difficult problems of the future. He again endeavoured to obtain from Sir Edward Grey a definite promise of English help in the event of a great war. Grey avoided an explicit answer and would not go beyond the indications previously given; nevertheless he affirmed that if a general war broke out the English fleet would aim at dealing Germany vital blows. They would certainly not venture into the Baltic, as it would be too easy to cut off the retreat for English ships.

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[1] Probably this possibility had been discussed at the deliberations of the General Staffs. *Vide* Sazonoff's report to the Czar, August 17th, 1912 Iswolski, September 12th. *Livre noir*, i. 324. Stieve, ii. 219, 249.

[2] Bethmann to Kiderlen, August 29th. Kiderlen to Bethmann, September 2nd. Note to the chargé d'affaires in Vienna, September 25th.

Meanwhile France had proposed that all the Great Powers should commission Russia and Austria in their name to warn the Balkan States against hostile movements and at the same time to insist at Constantinople upon the urgent necessity for reforms. Sazonoff thought it well to call attention to this, as it afforded an opportunity of preventing Austria from acting independently. For the rest he found little inclination either in England or in France for interfering with Turkey, out of consideration for the feelings of their many Moslem subjects. English support, he felt, could not be reckoned on if further events rendered energetic action against the Porte necessary. He took advantage of his visit to London to arrange with England about measures for excluding German influence from the neutral zone in Persia. In Paris also his impression was confirmed that above all things a peaceful solution was desired.

In Berlin he told Kiderlen that he considered the greatest danger was that Austria might attack Serbia when the latter entered Novibazar; Russia could not then look on quietly. Austria must decide to keep the peace for the time being as the future fate of the Sanjak could only be settled later on. As all the Powers wished to maintain the *status quo*, Austria could afterwards, as mandatory of the Powers, eject Serbia if she were not willing to leave voluntarily. He sought to allay the anxieties of the Secretary of State as to a mobilisation on the eastern frontier, by demonstrating that it was a regularly recurring measure for testing the military preparedness of the army and was devoid of offensive intentions. His assurances were received with distrust. He himself felt that Germany was unwilling to put pressure on Austria so as not to expose her influence at Vienna to too severe a test, and that Count Berchtold took advantage of Germany's fear of isolation in order to pursue an independent policy. As a matter of fact Kiderlen was dubious about giving unsought advice to Vienna. "We should then be held particularly responsible for neglected opportunities." [1]

The Entente Powers were unanimous that even in the event of war the *status quo* was to be maintained as long as possible. As the Triple Alliance Powers were also agreed on this point it seemed as if a sincere adherence to this basis would prevent an international conflict. On Poincaré's proposal Russia and Austria were commissioned on behalf of the Powers to tell the Balkan States that even after a war the Powers would allow no alteration in the territory of European Turkey. From the outset the Kaiser was justly sceptical of this programme. He did not believe that much could be saved of Turkey in Europe, and forbade the German Ambassador to give advice of any kind at Constantinople. He thought it both unjust and unwise to check the Balkan States if they were victorious. "The Bulgarians," he declared, "are the people of the future and should no more be interfered with in their development than the Prussians were long ago." There ought to be no obstruction of the natural impetus of the Balkan peoples towards a national form of government for their States, but merely an effort to restrict the fighting arena. It would be better to fight to a finish now, before Russia was ready for war, than later on. He consented reluctantly to the French proposal for intervention by Austria and Russia in the name of all the other Powers. He declared it was "an absolutely hopeless affair, a *testimonium paupertatis* for Europe." The step proved in fact perfectly useless. The Kaiser considered the most important thing was to keep in touch with England and, strange to say, also with Tokio.[1] Was he actually hoping that Japan would threaten the Russian rear if a general war arose out of the Balkan question? Kiderlen advised waiting for the result of the war, without being committed in advance by binding obligations to any side. He was ready for practical co-operation with England, which he considered more effectual than paper agreements.

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[1] Kiderlen's note, October 9th.

In Vienna Count Berchtold had declared at the end of September that it was of vital importance for the Monarchy to prevent the Serbians from occupying the Sanjak and reaching the Adriatic.[2] In view of Germany's remonstrances and of Russia's attitude Austria decided after some hesitation to preserve an armed neutrality, even should the Serbians occupy the Sanjak; only if they actually proceeded to incorporate it in their own State would she consider further measures.[1] But the troops were strengthened all along the southern frontiers in readiness for any emergency.

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[1] Jenisch to the Foreign Office, October 2nd and 5th. Kiderlen to Bethmann, October 4th. Kaiser's remarks on Tschirschky's report of October 6th. Jenisch to Kiderlen, October 11th. Kiderlen to Jenisch, October 12th. Kaiser's note, middle of October, *vide* Jäckh, ii. 189.

[2] Stolberg, September 27th.

On his return to St. Petersburg, Sazonoff assured the German Ambassador he would adhere to his programme of non-intervention in spite of the Pan-Slavs ; but if Austria advanced on the Sanjak, or if a great massacre of Christians took place in Turkey, that would be impossible.[2]

Immediately thereafter the Russian Ministers in the Balkan States sent word that the outbreak of war could no longer be held back. When Turkey mobilised a few detachments of troops near Montenegro, King Nikita declared war on the Sultan on October 8th—shortly before the delivery of the warning note from the Great Powers. Bulgaria and Serbia now proceeded to arm, and in spite of fresh official warnings from Russia, on October 17th a general war broke out in the Balkans. Under pressure of the impending heavy struggle Turkey decided to negotiate for peace direct with Italy, and in a treaty at Ouchy on October 15th ceded Tripoli unreservedly to Italy in return for an indemnity. The decision by arms followed more rapidly than anyone had expected. While the Serbians occupied Uskub, the western portion of Macedonia, the Sanjak of Novibazar, and a strip of Albanian frontier territory, and the Greeks took possession of southern Macedonia, the Bulgarians advanced impetuously on Constantinople. By the end of October they had reached the gates of Adrianople, and at Lule Burgas they won a great victory over the Turkish army. The Turks were forced to fall back behind the so-called Chataldja lines which covered Constantinople. In the middle of November the Greeks occupied Salonica.

A lively interchange of views among the Powers immediately began as to the attitude to be adopted towards these events. For a time they even decided to adhere to the *status quo* and insist upon reforms in Turkey. Nevertheless in England public opinion declared itself so strongly in favour of the Christian nationalities that Sir Edward Grey was forced to the conviction that the integrity of the Turkish Empire could no longer be maintained. In St. Petersburg they declared that as soon as an increase of the Balkan States was proposed by the other side it would be psychologically impossible for Russia to refuse. They insisted, however, that Constantinople and Adrianople should remain Turkish, and that none of the Great Powers should increase its territory on the Balkan Peninsula. Also, Austria was not to receive compensation of another kind, such as, for instance, leave to force on Serbia, in return for consenting to an extension of her territory, the conclusion of an alliance or a commercial treaty. Benckendorff thought Russia ought not to appear as if she wished to prevent an economic understanding between Austria and the Balkan States, as that would rouse England's distrust. Both the peoples and the Governments of the Western Powers would approve if the peace of Europe could be maintained by means of economic treaties which did not impair the sovereignty of the Balkan States. But it was possible to request that such an understanding should not be imposed beforehand as a condition. The Bulgarians were advised not to pitch their demands too high, as otherwise they would rouse Russia's opposition and imperil what had been already gained.

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[1] Kiderlen's note on a communication from the Austrian Ambassador, October 10th.

[2] Pourtalès, October 12th and 15th.

The Entente Powers finally decided that Turkish sovereignty should be maintained in Constantinople and the neighbourhood, but that Macedonia should be partitioned among the Balkan States. Russia ultimately, although unwillingly, consented to leave Adrianople to the Bulgarians. Complete unanimity could not be reached as to the future of the Straits. Grey was inclined to bring forward again the old English plan for declaring them neutral and applying the same conditions to Salonica. Poincaré viewed this plan with grave anxiety, knowing Russia's hostility to it and fearing any loosening of the Entente.[1]

In Vienna they could no longer ignore the fact that the old state of affairs could never be restored. There were violent altercations in the Ministerial Council. Count Berchtold wanted even now to prevent by force any increase of Serbian territory, and it was only with great difficulty that the President of the Council, Count Stürck, prevailed on him to yield. Finally it was decided to accept the situation without protest. It was even debated whether it would be possible to come to terms amicably with a larger Serbia on the basis of a customs and commercial alliance. On November 1st Berchtold sent word to Berlin of the terms on which he was prepared to recognise the increase of territory in the Balkan States. Serbia was to give guarantees that she would not pursue any policy hostile to the Monarchy nor enter the ranks of her enemies. Furthermore, she was to renounce the advance to the Adriatic and consent to the formation of an independent Albanian State. Bulgaria must take into consideration Roumania's legitimate wishes. Finally Austria's economic interests must be safeguarded, possibly by declaring Salonica a free port.[1]

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[1] Iswolski, November 6th. *Livre noir*, ii. 339. Stieve, ii. 333.

Kiderlen thought this programme " very sensible," as it indirectly contained the renunciation of the Sanjak. The Kaiser was more sceptical. He had no great belief in the durability of an Albanian " Robber State," and thought that Serbia's demands could only be carried out through the instrumentality of an alliance. But Serbia's connection with the Balkan League would make that difficult. He considered it more profitable to work for the formation of the " United States " of the Balkans and for their strengthening and their alliance with Turkey after peace had been concluded. Turkey would naturally find herself in opposition to Russia and would be thrown back on Austria.[2]

In the beginning of November the defeated Turks appealed for the intervention of the Powers. The Kaiser was wholly against Germany taking part in any such step. He wrote to the Foreign Office : " I forbid co-operation in any action which could be interpreted by the Quadruple Alliance as aiming at restraint, even at the risk of annoying several Powers in the Concert." [3] But as the other Powers were more inclined for intervention Germany could not altogether hold aloof.

They were all unanimous that before convening a conference, as France was again proposing, the Powers should agree as to their demands. Sir Edward Grey proposed to find out Russia's minimum demands ; Germany was to do the same at Vienna.

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[1] Tschirschky, October 26th, November 9th. Kiderlen's note on a dispatch from Szögenyi, November 1st.

[2] Kiderlen to Bethmann, November 1st. Report of November 3rd, with marginal comments by the Kaiser.

[3] The Kaiser to the Foreign Office, November 4th.

It then appeared that, after Austria had renounced the Sanjak, the only serious outstanding difficulty was whether Serbia should be granted a strip of north Albanian territory and a harbour in the Adriatic. San Giovanni di Medua was thought of. In the Austrian Ministry there was a party in favour of giving Serbia a harbour on the Adriatic in return for extensive economic concessions, because there was no other way of securing a lasting peace on the southern frontier. But Count Berchtold, this time supported by Italy, declared yielding to be out of the question; any concession would be regarded as weakness by Serbia; Austria would become dependent on the Serbians and their southern Slav compatriots.[1] This time he was successful. Austria declared to the Powers that in no circumstances would she consent to surrender a harbour on the Adriatic to Serbia (24th November). Russia, on the other hand, upheld this demand in Serbia's interest; and the Serbians did not heed Austria's opposition, but invaded Albania and occupied Durazzo. Kiderlen thought it might be possible to offer Russia the support of the Triple Alliance against the inclusion of Constantinople in Bulgarian territory, and to ask the Czar on his part to renounce further support of the Serbian claim. The Czar, however, spoke frankly about this to Prince Henry, saying that it was a matter of indifference to him whether the Bulgarians got Constantinople; he himself would not take it as a gift.[2] These words were evidently intended to minimise the value of such support as a means of compensation.

In this question the Kaiser differed from his advisers. He did not see why Austria should not allow Serbia a harbour on the Adriatic and declared that he was even less disposed to risk war with Russia and France on that account than for the sake of the Sanjak. The Triple Alliance was for the protection of the actual status of the allies, not for other aims. "I could not answer for that either to my people or to my conscience."[3] The Imperial Chancellor hurried off at once to Letzlingen, where the Kaiser was then hunting. He represented to him that such a decided attitude towards Austria might imperil the Alliance. The Kaiser maintained that a war on two fronts in which England would probably be on the enemies' side was an undertaking in which "everything would be at stake and in which Germany might eventually go under." Such a war could not be undertaken for the sake of Albania and Durazzo; the Alliance did not say that "the German army and people were to serve the whims of the foreign policy of another State and be at its disposal, so to speak, for such a purpose." He admitted, however, that Austria must not be left in the lurch. She must be induced to receive and make proposals for intervention. If these were accepted by the Powers but declined by Russia the Czar would thereby place himself in the wrong and awaken the suspicion that he wanted war and was merely using the Albanian question as a pretext. Russia would then be the aggressor, and we should have a good watchword for mobilisation. He yielded so far as to be willing to support Austria in case of need and to induce her only to pursue wiser tactics. Bethmann was satisfied with this. "Right basis discovered to-day," he telegraphed to Kiderlen.[1] Kiderlen sent word to Vienna that it was not for us to decide what Austria's interests in Albania required; we had to give her demands our diplomatic support and would not hesitate for a moment, "on further developments taking place, to fulfil our treaty obligations." We only desired that Austria should so conduct herself that she stood forth clearly to the world as the aggrieved party. The Serbian chargé d'affaires was also left in no doubt as to Germany's attitude.[2]

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[1] Tschirschky, November 9th, 13th, 18th.

[2] Kiderlen to Tschirschky, November 5th. The Kaiser to the Foreign Office, November 6th and 7th.

[3] The Kaiser to the Foreign Office, November 7th.

In the second half of November a general war seemed imminent. The Russian mobilisation was constantly extending and Austria consequently reinforced her troops in Galicia. The aged Emperor declared that this decision cost him more than the mobilisation in 1866. Auffenberg, the Minister of War, thought the Southern Slavs ought to be tranquillised, or the Monarchy would go to pieces. If Russia allowed the Galician reinforcements to continue under protest, that would be a sign that no opposition would be offered to proceedings against

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[1] Bethmann to Kiderlen, November 9th. The Kaiser to the Foreign Office, November 11th and 15th.

[2] Kiderlen to Tschirschky, November 19th.

Serbia.[1] From St. Petersburg Pourtalès sent word that the Grand Dukes' party had contrived to inspire in the peace-loving Czar a warlike mood, influenced probably by the extraordinary prophet Rasputin. Sazonoff yielded to the Pan-Slavs and spoke of war. The situation was becoming dangerous.[2] From Bucharest came word that the Russian Minister in Belgrade, Hartwig, whose sympathies were wholly Pan-Slav, had declared to the Roumanian Minister that it was quite impossible for Serbia to renounce a harbour on the Adriatic. Serbia must become the leading Slav Power in the Balkans and must annex Bosnia, Herzegovina, and the South Slav portion of Hungary; Roumania, he declared, would serve her own interests if she intervened and seized Siebenbürgen. Italy was playing a double game, and Germany would eventually, if things became serious, shake herself free. In vain, when questioned on the subject, Sazonoff tried to represent his Minister's remarks as partly erroneous and partly quite harmless.[3]

On November 22nd the Archduke Francis Ferdinand arrived on a visit to the Kaiser, ostensibly for hunting. He sought to demonstrate to him the necessity for vigorous proceedings against Serbia, but was exhorted both by the Kaiser and by Moltke, the Chief of the General Staff, to act with the utmost discretion. On the following day the Chief of the Austrian General Staff came to Berlin to confer with General von Moltke as to the measures to be taken should war break out in spite of all efforts to maintain peace. The Kaiser felt that things were now very serious; he too was no longer willing to undertake the responsibility of preventing Austria taking action, as inactivity might involve serious consequences for the Dual Monarchy. He ordered the Ambassadors in Paris and London to find out definitely what attitude the respective Governments of these countries would assume in the event of war and to inform him personally.[4] At the same time General Conrad von Hötzendorf, as confidential envoy from the Emperor Francis Joseph, hastened to Bucharest to King Charles, promised to support Roumania's wish for an extension of territory in the Dobrudja, and was assured of her loyalty as an ally. A common plan of advance against Russia and Serbia was agreed upon in writing.[1] The Czar immediately sent a Grand Duke to Bucharest to counteract this influence.

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[1] Pourtalès, November 20th.

[2] Griesinger, Belgrade, November 12th.

[3] The Kaiser to Kiderlen, November 22nd. General Conrad's dispatch to the Emperor Francis Joseph, December 2nd, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, ii. 354.

[4] Tschirschky, November 17th and 21st.

Meanwhile the Balkan League was loosening. The Bulgarians were not inclined to fight for Serbia's port on the Adriatic and thereby to risk the gains they had won. They were indignant that the Greeks had been before them at Salonica and were wholly unwilling to leave this important town to them. The Czar lamented the painful tragedy of this quarrel among allies. "Internationalisation would certainly be the fate of Constantinople some day: he himself at least would consider it the best solution. He was not anxious for Russia to possess the town."[2] It was even declared that King Ferdinand had offered Turkey an alliance; the Kaiser thought it not improbable, and considered that Austria ought to form a third in the alliance; Greece and Serbia would then by force of circumstances be compelled to come to terms. He sent orders to Constantinople to urge there the acceptance of an eventual offer by Bulgaria.[3] But no such offer was made. In his speech in the Reichstag on December 3rd the Imperial Chancellor emphasised the fact that Germany would stand by Austria if our ally, in asserting her interests, were attacked by a third party, and her existence thereby threatened.

In Berlin it was considered that Austria had done her utmost in yielding by renouncing the Sanjak. It was felt that further concessions should not be expected of her, and that she should be supported in her other demands whatever the risk, so that no doubt be thrown on the value of the alliance. Certainly they would have been glad to know whether Austria herself was determined even to face a war in order to carry out her demands of December 4th in their earlier extent. Our Ambassador had the impression that nothing was said about Austrian views because they themselves were not clear on the matter. Kiderlen remarked with a sigh, "it is time they were." Berchtold, Tschirschky thought, was only anxious to get out of the whole matter with credit to himself and to score a diplomatic success, which was a necessity if the South Slavs in Austria were to be kept tranquil, for the South Slav question was becoming more and more one of the most urgent problems of the Monarchy. But he did not know what economic and political guarantees he ought to demand from Serbia. To declare Serbia neutral after the Belgian pattern, quite the best solution, was not practicable. The best pledge, the Sanjak, Aehrenthal had unfortunately let go. The declaration of loyalty of 1909 was not worth the paper it was written on. A commercial treaty was not sufficient to influence opinion in Serbia, and it would not do to leave to Serbia the power to apply the match to the Pan-Slav powder-barrel. Nor did the other diplomatists and generals in Vienna know of any possible solution. They stood helpless faced by an insoluble problem.[1] And it was for this aimless Austrian policy that Germany, under given circumstances, was pledged to fight at the risk of her existence! Towards the middle of December the Kaiser gave orders to instruct public opinion on the significance of these questions, which he himself had judged quite differently a few weeks earlier. Otherwise, if war came about, no one would know "what interests Germany was fighting for in this war." [2]

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[1] Waldhausen (Bucharest), November 24th and December 3rd.

[2] Pourtalès, November 27th.

[3] The Kaiser to the Foreign Office, December 1st. Jenisch to the Foreign Office, December 2nd.

In Vienna the feeling for war seemed for a moment to conquer. On December 7th General Conrad, the old leader of the war party, at the instigation of the heir to the throne, was suddenly appointed Chief of the General Staff. He frankly expressed the view that this was the last opportunity to settle accounts with Serbia, which should have been done three years ago. Russia was not ready for war. But if the chance were again let slip, Austria would be financially exhausted by the continuous military preparations, the prestige of the Triple Alliance would be weakened, and the dispute would be settled by arbitration when it pleased the Entente. He considered the union of the South

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[1] Kiderlen to Tschirschky, December 3rd. The Austrian minimum demands, December 4th. Tschirschky, December 6th.

[2] Müller to Bethmann, December 12th.

Slav nations unavoidable, and that the question was now whether it should be developed within the Monarchy or at its expense. His aim was thus to incorporate Serbia within the Danube State. But it remained to be seen if the Archduke favoured this plan. When the German Military Attaché asked if the heir to the throne was resolved on war, General Conrad shrugged his shoulders. He did not even know, and yet he had been specially appointed by him. The Archduke personally told the German Military Attaché that war with Russia was "simply idiotic," as there was no reason for it and no prize worth such a risk. He saw no reason either for forcible proceedings against Serbia, and he had always opposed a policy that could lead to such conflicts. In his opinion domestic problems were much more vital for the Monarchy than foreign affairs.[1]

But there was no military conflict after all, for Russia decided not to support the Serbian demands unreservedly but to rest satisfied with a railway line from Serbia to an Albanian harbour which was to be declared neutral, and this Austria was ready to sanction.

From the Russian archives hitherto published it is amazing to find that Russia had already come to this decision in November. On the 13th November Serbia had been warned by Russia against obstinately insisting on her demands, and Russia had consoled her by promising the fulfilment of her wishes in subsequent conflicts among the Great Powers. In St. Petersburg they only wanted to curtail as much as possible the State of Albania. The Chief of the Russian General Staff declared to the French Ambassador that he believed in the purely defensive character of the Austrian armaments; and that even in the event of Austria attacking Serbia, Russia would not go to war. The reason of this lay in England's attitude. Whereas Poincaré now assured the Russians of his active support not only if Germany joined in the fighting but also in the event of Austria's desiring territorial acquisitions, and even explicitly declared that if Russia went to war France would join her,[2] Sir Edward Grey constantly counselled delay. He recognised Austria's moderation and the justice of her economic demands. He made it perfectly clear that it would be difficult to persuade public opinion in England to sanction participation in a war caused by disputes in the Balkans, and certainly only if Austria were clearly the aggressor and France were drawn into the struggle. In London they did not consider the first condition fulfilled.

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[1] Kageneck, Military Attaché, December 17th, 1912, February 26th, 1913. Cf. Conrad, *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*, ii. 376, 412; also F. Kern, "Die südslavische Frage und die Wiener Kriegspartei, 1913-1914," in *Schmollers Jahrbuch*, 48. 243.

[2] Iswolski's reports, November 7th, 17th, and 18th, and December 14th. *Livre noir*, 340, 368. Stieve, ii. 335, 346, 347 and 388.

Russia's decision caused Poincaré "the greatest consternation," so Iswolski said. He pointed to the fact that Austria's military preparations were well advanced; at any moment she might attack. In Paris it had been regarded as certain that if Russia attacked, Germany would automatically be drawn into the struggle, in which case the terms of the treaty became operative for France. This possibility had been taken into consideration "deliberately and in cold blood" and preparations had been made for immediate action, and now—Russia suddenly hesitated! Either in St. Petersburg they were misjudging Austria's dangerous intentions or else they must have some secret reasons for their inexplicable conduct. Poincaré could not say more plainly that, in spite of all the talk of peace, he was then anxious to bring about war. He only calmed down when Iswolski assured him that they were merely wishing to avoid the appearance of stirring up a general war for the sake of Serbia's demands. If necessary, the ostensible reason advanced must be Austria's and Germany's attempt "to establish their hegemony in the Balkans and consequently in Europe."[1] Only then would England join them. Count Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador, was fully justified in his impression that in Paris they wanted the war, whereas the English Government was openly endeavouring to avoid it if at all possible.

The fact that Russia was constantly increasing her armaments and persistently pressing upon the Triple Alliance Powers Serbia's demand for a harbour on the Adriatic, although it had long been decided to let that matter drop, rouses the suspicion that the Russians hoped by this attitude to exasperate Austria and cause her to take some imprudent step, which could then be cited as provocation and perhaps might enable them to ask for English help. Germany was fully justified in always warning Vienna to avoid appearing to be the aggressor.

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[1] *Vide* Iswolski's despatch of December 18th. Stieve, ii. 396.

In any case the key of the situation lay in London. Had Sir Edward Grey been either able or willing to assure his allies of England's help, the world war would probably have broken out then. Grey not only withheld this assurance, but exerted himself in common with Germany to prevent the clash of arms. Indeed, during these critical weeks he even took a remarkable step towards drawing nearer to Germany.

From Marschall's death till Lichnowsky's arrival (middle of November), Germany was represented in London by von Kühlmann, the Counsellor of the Embassy. On October 15th Sir Edward Grey handed him a communication which raised his hopes to the highest pitch.[1] Through his private secretary, Sir Edward let him know that he was thoroughly sick of the long haggling and wished to give us his hand in hearty and lasting reconciliation and offered us the olive branch of peace. In the East our interests were identical and directed towards localising the conflict. "If the intimacy of German and English diplomacy could be established by this co-operation in difficult times, we might be able to come to an understanding with one another on all political wishes and interests. He is ready to meet us as far as possible and considers co-operation in China, Persia, Turkey and Africa full of promise. The Minister emphasises the fact that he considers this an important and decisive step and hopes that it will also be considered as such by us." Kühlmann was convinced that in England the question of the fleet was no longer to be treated as an obstacle to closer relations. It was a psychological moment of the first importance. In any case Grey must be given a thoroughly adequate answer, otherwise he would be mortally offended, for it must have been very hard for a man of his nature to take the initiative.

Kiderlen was not able fully to share this optimism. In the first place, it was a question of Grey's personal opinions, not of the decisions of the English Cabinet. Also he seemed desirous to learn our views without betraying anything definite as to his own. He authorised Kühlmann to discuss fully the Balkan problems, and also stated that Germany had only a secondary interest in the future of Constantinople, and that here Germany would gladly co-operate with England. To this he added the request that all further negotiations should be kept strictly secret, but that agreements when reached should immediately be published and be jointly notified to the other Powers. Furthermore, it was desirable that they should now agree not to oppose one another in matters where no vital interests were involved. We were not to allow ourselves to be exploited merely to enable England to realise passing aims and then be sacrificed again for other considerations.[1]

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[1] Kühlmann, October 15th.

But this implied the demand that England should purchase our co-operation with her in the East by a general political Entente and the virtual sacrifice of her previous political relations. Could one expect Grey to consent to that, knowing as he did that our own interest in this case obliged us to co-operate with England? Was it wise to propose already conditions of that sort instead of waiting to find out how far a temporary co-operation was likely to take us in future? Fundamentally this attitude contradicted the programme only recently outlined by Kiderlen himself. The Kaiser, too, was distrustful. He thought England was really striving to restore the balance of power and wanted to see-saw between the two groups without having to pledge herself to us.[2]

Kühlmann told Sir Edward Grey what his instructions were and received a friendly answer from the Minister, requesting frequent continuation of the discussions. He also consented to keep the conversations private and to joint action when agreement had been reached. As for the Eastern question, Sir Edward declared any restoration of liberated Christian territory to the Turks was impossible. England would only intervene actively if it was a question of the future of Constantinople. Otherwise he would accept any solution in which Russia and Austria were unanimous and would be glad to co-operate on this footing with Germany.[3]

Was this overture on Grey's part merely a piece of chess-board

[1] Kiderlen to Kühlmann, October 20th.

[2] Kaiser's comment on Lichnowsky's dispatch of November 19th.

[3] Kühlmann, October 25th and 28th.

strategy or was it a sign that England was seriously contemplating a new phase of general policy with the ultimate aim of recovering her old position between the parties? It is impossible to say. But this much is certain, that the attempt to bind England forthwith more closely to Germany, to release her from the Entente, and to replace the existing combinations by a sort of Anglo-German Duumvirate, must have been for him, in view of his whole political career and character, a doubtful and disturbing business even if his overture were sincerely meant.

Did they learn anything in Paris about these carefully guarded efforts of their ally to draw nearer to the leader of the enemy group of Powers? Paul Cambon, with his gift for observation and his shrewdness, could scarcely fail to discover something. Possibly Poincaré's uncompromising partisanship and his provocative tone towards Iswolski are to be traced back to his anxiety over an Anglo-German *rapprochement.* Perhaps he wished to force Russia into attacking before this movement had assumed a more definite form. He certainly saw that England and Germany were working together to localise the Balkan struggle, and also that England sought to substitute concerted action by all the Powers for intervention by the Entente, and that she wished to avoid the clash of arms. If Count Benckendorff thought that he felt a slight tension between London and Paris at the end of October he was probably quite right. Kühlmann had noticed signs of friction between the allies over the relations with Spain in Morocco and France's encouragement of the smuggling of arms into Muscat. The fact that Sir Edward Grey had let it be known that he would rather see Constantinople in the hands of the Bulgarians or made a neutralised free city than in the possession of Russia, must certainly have been perplexing to the French, for Russia openly threatened to send her whole fleet instantly to Constantinople as soon as the Bulgarians entered there. Grey also objected to the permanent retention by the Greeks of the islands which they had occupied in the north of the Aegean Sea, in view of their importance for the control of the Straits.

As the danger of war was growing more serious, in November Poincaré sought to urge Italy to declare that, in accordance with the treaties of 1902, she would not fight against France. Harassed by anxiety over the Anglo-German *rapprochement*, he appears to have used this strained situation in order to get Cambon to make fresh inquiries of Sir Edward Grey as to England's probable attitude. The result of these efforts is contained in the exchange of letters between Grey and Cambon of November 22nd and 23rd, of the previous history of which we are ignorant. Here both Governments pledged themselves—without prejudice to their liberty of movement—to communicate immediately with one another if one of the two Powers expected an unprovoked attack by another or else some event threatening the general peace. They were then to deliberate immediately as to whether united action was likely to prevent the attack or to maintain the peace, and what measures should be taken for this purpose. Actually, however, this exchange of letters signified nothing beyond what would have happened without special discussion in view of the existing friendly relations. It contained no obligation to render unconditional support, merely to discuss things, the result of which might prove negative. It did not bind the States, only the individual statesmen then in conduct of affairs. At the same time it strengthened the moral bond, deterred either of the two Governments in such situations from coming to rash and one-sided conclusions, and created the opportunity, indeed the right, in such circumstances, for the one Power to ask what the other intended to do.

How could Grey consent to this exchange of declarations, knowing as he did France's hostility to Germany which he would dread to increase, while he was at the same time negotiating with Germany to collaborate with her in all great world-wide problems? Were his remarks to Kühlmann merely the expression of some passing disappointment with his allies? Did he not realise the significance of this exchange of letters? In the case of so experienced and cautious a diplomatist as Grey this possibility does not hold good. He had put aside a very similar proposal from Germany in spring, on the ground that it was too far-reaching in its scope. Did he perhaps wish to evade the strong pressure from France to undertake further commitments by a species of payment on account? Was he perhaps using their close relations to restrain the French keenness for war? Finally, did Germany's reception of his overture influence him? We do not know whether in October when Grey spoke to

Kühlmann, any French proposal for the subsequent exchange of opinions was already under consideration. If this were so, Grey's inquiries might be intended to find out Germany's attitude before tightening the bonds with France, and Germany's earnest desire to be offered at once the whole hand and not merely the little finger may have contributed its quota in bringing the English Government to its decision.

In any case these proceedings strengthened the Entente. Grey treated Germany with increasing reserve although, as before, he sought to collaborate with us over the Eastern question. When the new German Ambassador, Prince Lichnowsky, came to London, Sir Edward Grey said to him that England and Germany as the two Powers least directly interested in the East must make it their charge to prevent a conflict there which would involve the other Powers. "It is quite incalculable to-day who then might be drawn into the fighting."[1] As Nicolson said to the Russian Ambassador, that ought to be a warning to Germany not to reckon absolutely on England not taking part. In spite of that, at a banquet in London on November 30th Prince Lichnowsky, relying on Grey's general attitude, considered himself justified in saying that England and Germany advanced together for the peace of Europe and that their relations had never been franker nor more cordial than at that very time.

A conversation shortly afterwards with Haldane must nevertheless have given the Ambassador cause for reflection. Haldane remarked quite frankly that if war broke out England would take part with France and Russia, and he expressed the deeper reason for this ; England must strive to maintain the balance of power between the two Continental groups. Under no circumstances could France be allowed to be overthrown as was presaged. "England cannot and will not see herself opposed in the future by a united Continental group under the leadership of a single Power." The balance of power was one of the axioms of England's foreign policy. England wanted the best of relations with Germany, not war. But if war came about he could not answer for anything.[2]

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[1] Lichnowsky, November 27th.

[2] Lichnowsky, December 3rd, with comments by the Kaiser. *Vide* Tirpitz, *Dokumente*, 361. Also a letter from Prince Henry to the Kaiser of December 19th (Tirpitz, 363), attributing similar ideas to King George, but less definitely stated.

There was nothing ambiguous about that. The Kaiser saw in it a confirmation of the view he had expressed some weeks previously, and detected in Haldane's language a hidden threat. He said, "The final struggle between the Slav and the Germanic races finds the Anglo-Saxons on the side of the Slavs and the Gauls." He saw the reason of it in England's jealousy of us and her fear lest we should become too powerful. He was right when he said that the situation was now cleared up and we knew what to expect. As a precautionary measure he again contemplated a military convention with Bulgaria, Turkey, and Roumania and eventually with Japan. "Every Power that can be had is good enough to help us. For Germany it is a question of 'to be or not to be.'"[1] As a matter of fact it was harder than he thought to win new allies. Lichnowsky also stated his view, that England wanted peace, but in the event of a Franco-German war would immediately mobilise her fleet, and at latest, after the first German victory, would attack us; for in any case she could not calmly look on at the military overthrow of France. If we were to go to war with Russia alone—an improbable event—the consequences would not be quite the same.[2]

As Austria did not let herself be forced into active measures, as Russia had privately decided to abandon the Serbian claim to a port on the Adriatic, and as Germany and England desired to maintain the peace, at the end of November Kiderlen thought the moment propitious for easing the tension by having a confidential exchange of views among the Great Powers; and he made a suggestion accordingly. Poincaré used this as a pretext for reviving his earlier plan of an Ambassadors' Conference in Paris, as an exchange of views by telegram was too slow and too uncertain. The Triple Alliance Powers agreed to the principle of the proposal, but desired that the conference should refrain from inconclusive declarations and that it should meet in London, as they distrusted Poincaré and Iswolski, and also hoped that Sir Edward Grey, by his personal guidance, would exercise a moderating influence. On this point the Entente Powers ultimately gave way, although unwillingly, for they knew Poincaré's personal vanity and that he would have liked to fill the rôle of president. Perhaps he ought to have been granted this satisfaction.

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[1] The Kaiser to Kiderlen, December 8th.

[2] Lichnowsky, December 4th and 9th.

As Turkey's means of resistance were exhausted and no help reached her from any quarter, on December 3rd she decided to conclude a truce with the Balkan States (except Greece). On December 16th the representatives of the belligerent States met in London to negotiate for peace. On the 17th the Conference of the Ambassadors of the Great Powers began its sittings. Early in January the negotiations broke down because Turkey refused to surrender to her enemies the fortresses of Skutari, Janina and Adrianople, which had not yet been conquered. The autonomy of Albania was recognised in principle. When the Great Powers, at Russia's request, urged Turkey to surrender Adrianople, the Turkish Government consented, but it was turned out of office by a revolution led by Enver Bey (January 23rd). As the new Government would only cede the part of Adrianople lying west of the Maritza, the truce was broken off, and on February 3rd the war broke out anew.

In March Janina and Adrianople fell. Just at this time fresh developments were threatened by Roumania's claim for compensation. After Russia had refused Bulgaria's request that the Czar alone should decide this dispute and had handed the matter over to the Ambassadors' Conference, this question was superseded by the North Albanian difficulty. Montenegro besieged Skutari and, in spite of the prohibition of the Great Powers, forced it to capitulate on April 23rd. Previously, at Sir Edward Grey's suggestion, a fleet representing the Great Powers had been stationed off the Albanian coast and had blockaded it. In spite of that, however, Prince Nikita refused to evacuate Skutari, and only consented to do so when Austria showed she would otherwise drive him out by force and the Great Powers held out the prospect of an indemnity (May 14th). Serbia now evacuated Durazzo but demanded an extension of her frontier in Macedonia, as she was not getting anything in Albania and had helped in the conquest of Adrianople. This decided Bulgaria, on April 16th, to conclude a separate truce with Turkey. After long toil and under pressure from the Powers, the preliminary Peace of London was signed on May 30th. Turkey ceded all the territory west of the line from Enos to Midia, and also Crete. The Powers were to decide as to the islands of the Aegean Sea and the frontiers of Albania, but the Balkan States were to settle among themselves the disposal of the remaining conquests.

During these proceedings there had been anxious consideration in Vienna and Berlin whether the integrity of Asiatic Turkey would not be infringed. If plans of this kind were carried out by the other side, Germany was resolved to demand her share. Bethmann was much afraid that this might lead to serious conflicts, and, in view of the general situation, that we might not have the necessary means at our disposal for the occupation and retention of territory in Asia Minor. He wished by some means or other to postpone these suggestions as long as possible. Also there was a fear of bringing up the Straits question and strengthening the Russian position—and consequently the Entente—in the Mediterranean.[1]

On the whole, during the delicate negotiations of the Ambassadors' Conference, the collaboration of Germany and England promoted the interests of peace. As Germany had a restraining influence on Austria and England on Russia, the critical points in the negotiations had been tackled without serious disputes. In the difficult matter of defining the frontiers of the new Albanian State a compromise had been reached. At the outset of the conference, Austria had determined to agree to an alteration in the north-eastern frontier of Albania proposed by her only on condition that Skutari remained in the new State; Russia had at the same time come to the conclusion that Skutari could not be saved for Montenegro. Yet the negotiations on the subject dragged on for months, simply because neither of the two Powers would openly declare its assent before being sure of getting some compensation in return. Meanwhile in Berlin they avoided everything that could give offence to Austria or raise doubts in Vienna as to our loyalty to the alliance.

This collaboration between Germany and England led to an increasing friendliness in their relations. The Imperial Chancellor hoped for a still further development, but warned Lichnowsky, who in his opinion was too impetuous in his efforts in this direction, to proceed gently and cautiously. He knew that England would not give up the Entente and that she adhered to the policy of the balance of power. Hence, he held, Germany must stand firm by the Triple Alliance, otherwise there was the danger that England "with whom our relations are not yet so firmly interwoven," might leave us exposed to the Franco-Russian pressure. That would be unbearable for us in the future. The question of Asia Minor, which was bound to come up again, we could only solve in collaboration with England, "just as we are bound in all our colonial questions in future to work in co-operation with England."[1]

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[1] Zimmerman's note, January 16th, 1913. Bethmann to Lichnowsky, January 27th.

During the whole winter of 1912-1913 the greater part of the Russian and the Austrian armies remained mobilised, the latter in Galicia especially. So long as this was the case there was always the danger of an outbreak between the two Powers. Neither of the two would take the first steps towards disarming. In Berlin they kept urging for an explanation on this point, as it was difficult to understand why, since Russia had abandoned Serbia's claim to a harbour on the Adriatic, Austria should continue these armaments with their heavy, indeed almost insupportable burden on her feeble finances. It seems that General Conrad still clung to his idea of a military overthrow of Serbia, without which he considered it impossible to secure lasting tranquillity on the southern frontiers; he aimed at a partitioning of Serbia between Bulgaria, Roumania and Austria, as well as the complete annexation of Montenegro. The Archduke Francis Ferdinand, on the other hand, frankly declared that he did not want such a war, even if there were no fear of Russia's intervention, as there was nothing to be gained by it; nor did he wish to intervene in the war which had again broken out among the Balkan States. Count Berchtold agreed with this view, which was warmly supported in Berlin. But as Jagow, the Secretary of State, remarked, "To look on does not require the army to be mobilised." General von Moltke was of this opinion too, and advised emphasising this point at Vienna. He himself wrote to Conrad that he would have understood military proceedings against Serbia on account of the Sanjak or a harbour on the Adriatic, but as both questions were disposed of he could see no more reason for them. War for such a cause would not meet with public approval in Germany and, without that, war on a big scale was no longer possible nowadays. Bethmann urgently impressed on Count Berchtold that Russia could not leave Serbia in the lurch without serious loss of prestige. He emphasised the uncertainty of Italy's attitude in the event of war with the Entente. Hence he felt compelled to beg him " to be so kind as to inform me of the course which the policy of the Imperial and Royal Government intends to pursue in the further development of this crisis." Finally he reminded him of England's marked approach, which if it led to a new orientation of British policy, would greatly improve our chances in a future war, should this prove necessary. Violent proceedings on Austria's part would interrupt this development and would therefore be, in his opinion, an " error of incalculable significance." The Kaiser also wrote advising the Archduke Francis Ferdinand to disarm as soon as he was sure of a corresponding attitude on Russia's part. Indirectly they were given to understand in Vienna that in the event of war with Serbia, the treaty could not be regarded as operative without further consideration.[1] The aged Emperor Francis Joseph, before these last urgent admonitions, had already sent Prince Hohenlohe with an autograph letter to the Czar containing tranquillising assurances as to his intentions. But several weeks elapsed before an arrangement was reached about disarmament. It was only on March 11th that the agreement was published and demobilisation begun.

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[1] Bethmann to Lichnowsky, January 30th.

Austria had certainly scored a success in preventing Serbia reaching the Adriatic, but she had not been able to prevent the further extension of Serbia, which was her real aim ; and now she had to consider very seriously what attitude she ought to adopt in future towards these increased Balkan States. The alliance with Roumania was renewed in February and March, 1913, by all the Triple Alliance Powers, till 1920,[2] and was to remain the basis of future policy in the Balkans. From

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[1] Duke of Wurtemberg on a conversation with the Archduke, February 2nd. Moltke to Jagow, February 6th. Bethmann to Berchtold, February 10th. Moltke to Conrad, February 10th. The Kaiser to the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, February 24th. *Vide* Montgelas, *Leitfaden zur Kriegschuldfrage*, p. 53.

[2] *Vide* text in Pribram, i. 107.

Berlin they advised Austria to seek to establish good relations with Serbia by means of close political and economic agreements. In March the Kaiser himself declared : " Vienna's policy towards Serbia has failed. They ought to try to retrieve the mistake and to grant Serbia the support which she needs and wishes regarding Bulgaria." Austria must endeavour to win over to herself Roumania, Serbia and Greece, who had no conflicting interests but were all in violent opposition to Bulgaria, and eventually to carry Turkey with her as well. That meant a partitioning of the Slav races; otherwise all the Slavs would simply be driven into the arms of Russia.[1]

But Count Berchtold declared this impossible. Both dynasty and people in Serbia were wedded to the idea of a greater Serbia, the realisation of which no Austrian statesman could allow. His desire was a close understanding with Bulgaria, who was to part with Silistria to Roumania and in return to receive as compensation Salonica, which had been occupied and claimed by the Greeks. He considered any closer relations with Greece, who was coveting south Albania, impossible. The war spectre of the Balkan League could only be exorcised by including Roumania and Bulgaria in the Triple Alliance. In vain Tschirschky insisted that already consideration for the strong Roumanian and Slav elements in the Dual Monarchy made co-operation desirable with these very States, which was a sort of insurance against separatist tendencies, and that they could proceed quietly and unobtrusively.[2]

The intense hostility between Roumania and Bulgaria was a serious obstacle to the Austrian plan. Through the intervention of the Powers a treaty was signed at the end of May between the two States, by which Silistria was surrendered to Roumania, but while she was far from satisfied with what she had gained, in Bulgaria they gnashed their teeth over their loss. The Berlin plan appeared much sounder and more promising ; it was based on the idea that Austria ought to regain her lost influence in Serbia by friendly means. It implied, however, a complete reversal of the Vienna policy, and in any case it was highly doubtful if Serbia would honestly carry it out. It was the old insoluble problem once more. Berchtold was again endeavouring to detach Bulgaria gradually from Russia, draw her closer to the Triple Alliance, and bring about an understanding with Roumania on the question of compensations. The principal aim, he declared, must afterwards be to prevent, with the help of Bulgaria and Turkey, Russia's advance in Asia Minor and on the Straits. He demanded somewhat peremptorily Germany's support for this policy ; and as Austria was much more deeply interested in the Balkan question, he believed he could reckon on it. Any lack of harmony could only strengthen the enemies of the Triple Alliance.

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[1] The Kaiser to the Foreign Office, March 5th. *Vide* remarks on Pourtalès' despatch, March 5th.

[2] Tschirschky, March 5th, 13th, 20th. Berchtold's despatch, May 2nd

In St. Petersburg Austria's endeavours to win Bulgaria's friendship were watched carefully and suspiciously. The Bulgarians were advised to make concessions to Roumania, threats having proved useless at Bucharest; and it was really under Russian pressure that Bulgaria accepted the decision of the Powers with regard to Silistria. At the same time Russia sought to console Serbia for her disappointment by telling her that the new Albanian State was only a provisory creation, not likely to last long, that the Danube Monarchy would soon break up, and Serbia would then get full satisfaction for her wishes. "Serbia's promised land lies within the territory of Austria-Hungary to-day, and not where she is striving at present and where the Bulgarians stand across her path," so wrote Sazonoff on May 6th to Hartwig, the Minister in Belgrade.[1]

Serbia, however, was not immediately willing to let herself be comforted by prospects in such a remote future. She thought that she ought to be compensated for the gain of which she had been deprived in the south-west by an increase of the Macedonian spoils at Bulgaria's expense. She believed she had rendered more service in war than she was obliged to do by the terms of the treaty, whereas Bulgaria had done less and received more—namely Adrianople—than was originally intended. Greece had similar wishes, as she had to renounce likewise part of the increase of territory she had expected in southern Albania. Greece and Serbia united in demanding from their former ally the voluntary surrender of a considerable portion of Macedonia.

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[1] Published in the German White Book, p. 98.

On May 25th Serbia requested in Sofia a revision of the conditions of the treaty. This Bulgaria refused. A conference of the Premiers of the allied Balkan States was convened, but failed to effect a settlement. The Czar appealed in vain for peace, and on the 17th summoned the Premiers to his tribunal at St. Petersburg. In the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty he had been expressly mentioned as arbitrator. But Bulgaria, who had good grounds for expecting an unfavourable verdict from the Czar, made excuses; while Greece, who was not bound by treaty, refused to recognise the Czar's jurisdiction. And after some minor disturbances between the allied troops, a Bulgarian attack on the Serbian lines on June 30th inaugurated the second Balkan War.

This time Roumania attacked at once, after Austria had vainly endeavoured to induce the Bulgarians to surrender voluntarily the whole of the territory claimed by the Roumanians. The Turks also used the opportunity to renew the struggle for Adrianople, and they actually re-conquered this town.

Bulgaria was not equal to these four enemies. She appealed for the Czar's help and for Austria's support, and at last, in despair, offered to join the Triple Alliance. But no help was forthcoming. King Ferdinand was advised to negotiate direct with his enemies. He turned finally to King Charles; and after some difficulty the struggle was suspended, and at the end of July negotiations for peace began in Bucharest.

The Great Powers were now faced with the question whether they should beforehand recognise as binding the result of these direct negotiations among the Balkan States, or should reserve the right of revising the result. Austria, who wished to see Bulgaria as little weakened as possible, was strongly in favour of this precaution, as were also England and Russia. Germany from the outset opposed it, for reasons which we are about to learn. Ultimately the decision about recognition was deferred until the terms had been made known. In Bucharest it was at once apparent that Serbia and Greece would insist on retaining almost the whole of Macedonia and that nothing could be done about it. However, a violent quarrel arose when Greece claimed also the Thracian harbour of Kavalla, whereas Bulgaria was to receive the much less favourably situated harbour of

Dedeagatch on the Aegean Sea. Greece was supported by France, while Russia and Austria, at all other times opponents, favoured Bulgaria. England avoided a decisive attitude as her allies were of opposite opinions. Italy also was wavering. Germany, on the other hand, came forward boldly in this question, in favour of Greece.

On March 18th King George of Greece was assassinated at Salonica. His son and successor, Constantine, was the Kaiser's brother-in-law. At the very beginning of the peace negotiations the Queen telegraphed to her brother begging his support for Greece's wishes, and received his consent by return.[1] Was this attitude on the Kaiser's part decided purely by family interests? He himself has always emphatically denied it. He considered Greece a valuable ally for the future and could point to the fact that Constantine had already offered his allegiance to the Triple Alliance. Jagow, the Secretary of State, shared this view. In consequence of this, Germany not only used her influence in Vienna, Rome, London, and St. Petersburg, to obtain Kavalla for Greece, but the Kaiser personally requested the King of Roumania to use his influence on the same side in the negotiations for peace. King Charles replied that personally it was a matter of indifference to him who got Kavalla. Hitherto he had been more in favour of Bulgaria, but as Germany was so zealous on behalf of Greece he would alter his attitude accordingly.[2] As Russia, probably from consideration for France, withdrew her opposition, England had no longer any reason for refusing this solution. Austria was completely isolated. In the treaty of peace, signed on August 10th, Greece consequently received Kavalla. Bulgaria had to surrender to Roumania a wide belt of territory in the southern Dobrudja, and to the other two States the larger part of Macedonia. She only signed the treaty under protest, yielding to force, in the hope that the Powers would yet revise it and alter it in her favour.

The Powers had indeed reserved the formal right of revision, but an alteration could only have been requested and carried out if they had been absolutely unanimous among themselves, which was far from being the case. From the very outset the Kaiser was opposed to any modification of the Bucharest decisions after the event. He had little liking for the manner in which Austria had treated Roumania, and feared any disturbance of Roumania's relations towards the Triple Alliance, especially as Russia and France were constantly increasing their adherents there. He felt it incumbent on him to make good his ally's mistake and to show King Charles every possible consideration. He was afraid of fresh difficulties if the Powers subsequently altered the treaty which had been concluded under the King's auspices. He also urgently counselled Vienna to give way.

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[1] The Queen to the Kaiser, July 31st. The Kaiser's reply, August 1st.

[2] Tschirschky, July 25th. Pourtalès, July 27th. Jagow to Waldhausen, August 1st. To Tschirschky, August 1st and 2nd. Jagow to Jenisch, August 3rd; Jenisch to Jagow, August 3rd.

What was Austria to do? Since the beginning of July Count Berchtold had been preparing military measures against Serbia in the event of the Serbians capturing and retaining Monastir, and had only reluctantly yielded to energetic remonstrances from Berlin.[1] Now under the influence of General Conrad, who strenuously advocated a more vigorous policy, Austria was once more thinking of war against Serbia because of the delay in withdrawing the Serbian troops from Albania.[2] But Italy protested urgently, nor could any approval of such a step be expected from Berlin. In any revision of the treaty of peace by the Powers Austria would certainly be in a minority, so there was nothing for it but to protest and comply.[3] But in Vienna it was felt that this time Germany had left them in the lurch.

Turkey had had no part in the Bucharest negotiations and was still at war with Bulgaria. She demanded the return of Adrianople. In vain the Entente Powers threatened her with a blockade and an economic boycott if she did not abide by the frontier line, Enos—Media, as settled in London. Germany took no part in these proceedings. The Kaiser considered them useless, and secretly hoped, if drastic steps were necessary, that the divergence in the interests of England, Russia and France on the Dardanelles would become acute and might ultimately even break up the Entente.[1] Possibly the Powers of the Triple Entente were feeling this themselves. In any case they finally consented to a peace by which Bulgaria was forced to cede not only Adrianople but also Kirk-Kilisse (29th September).

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[1] Tschirschky, July 3rd. Zimmerman to Treutler, July 4th. Bethmann to Tschirschky, July 6th. For Berchtold's and Conrad's attitude at this time cp. F. Kern in *Europäischen Gesprächen,* ii. 3.

[2] Flotow, July 28th, from San Giuliano.

[3] Tschirschky, August 6th.

Peace had at last been restored to the Balkan Peninsula. The map had been completely changed; Turkey had been driven out of her old territory in Europe with the exception of a small remnant, Serbia and Greece were greatly enlarged, and Bulgaria was utterly exhausted by the struggle. Roumania, likewise increased, looked as if she might become the strongest of the Balkan States.

For Austrian policy this result could not be agreeable. At the very outbreak of the second Balkan War Count Berchtold had declared that Austria could not allow any further increase of Serbia or her direct contact with Greece. Now, however, she had been forced to agree to both, as neither Germany nor Italy had shown any inclination to regard military measures against Serbia as defensive or to recognise any obligation for active support if other Powers interfered. In addition, she had estranged Roumania in order to win over Bulgaria to her side. Yet even in Vienna they would have liked if possible to have retained Roumania for the Triple Alliance, but doubted if this were practicable after King Charles' death. Germany's exhortations to come to an understanding with Serbia and Greece were very unpalatable to Austria. She still coquetted with Bulgaria, although Jagow reminded her that the promises of a drowning man were of little value, and it would be impossible to collaborate permanently with both Bulgaria and Roumania. It was like trying to square the circle, as Count Forgach, of the German Foreign Office, admitted with a sigh.[2] Austria was once more face to face with the Balkan question and the whole South Slav problem, without either advice or plan, obsessed by the dread lest further disasters abroad might lead to the internal collapse of the Monarchy.

For Germany this evident feebleness and lack of definite aim in her ally was highly disagreeable. It might become dangerous, as Austria never informed the German Government in good time of her intentions—often because she did not herself know what she wanted—and in spite of this she always demanded unconditional support on the ground that she was the Power more closely interested in the Balkans. In February, 1913, the Chief of the General Staff had written to the Secretary of State:

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[1] The Kaiser to the Foreign Office, August 16th.

[2] Jagow's note, September 26th.

> "It is unquestionably very inconvenient for us to be placed in a certain dependence upon Vienna, owing to our treaties and to the necessity of upholding Austria. One of the main tasks of your Excellency ought to be to prevent as far as possible foolish action on Austria's part, no pleasant nor easy task." [1]

He, like the Kaiser and the Imperial Chancellor, saw the struggle between "Slavism and Germanism" coming constantly nearer, and they endeavoured—although they did not desire it and in any case would let the Slavs be the aggressors—to influence the general situation so that if war did break out our chances were favourable. In such a struggle could a State which was half Slav prove an absolutely reliable ally? The Kaiser declared that the next tasks were to make sure of Roumania, to win over Greece, to remove Austria's ill-humour, and if possible, to work for the removal of Count Berchtold and the substitution of a different personality at the head of affairs in Vienna.[2] This last aim was not realised. There was evidently no statesman in the Dual Monarchy with a sound and workable plan for the future foreign policy.

Under these circumstances Germany could only aim at preventing a clash of arms between the two great groups of Powers. During the Balkan crisis she had succeeded in this, with England's co-operation. Ought it not to have been possible to reduce substantially the exhausting tension under which our Continent had laboured for six long years, by prudently strengthening those relations of mutual trust which had been initiated? Once more the hope sprang up of recapturing what had previously been let slip. Was this hope really justified?

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[1] Moltke to Jagow, February 6th, 1913.

[2] The Kaiser to the Foreign Office, August 16th.

# XVII. THE LAST PAUSE

The Balkan crisis had passed without any general war. Once again those who sincerely desired peace breathed freely. Germany and England had again drawn together, and the hostility between the Triple Alliance and the Entente had apparently lost its sharp edge. In December, 1912, the Triple Alliance had been renewed after long negotiations without any essential alterations, and was to continue till 1926. The conclusion of this treaty was one of the last official acts of Kiderlen-Wächter: on December 30th, 1912, he died suddenly, and was succeeded by Herr von Jagow. Various settlements by arbitration seemed to make the sudden outbreak of war more difficult. In the Far East and in Africa all was quiet. But in France, in February, 1913, Poincaré became President of the Republic; and he at once sent Delcassé, who was strongly anti-German, to St. Petersburg as Ambassador, because he was "in a sense the personification of the alliance" and was fully informed of the military designs of the French General Staff.[1] In July Poincaré carried through the three years' military service, and in the following months he profited by Russia's need of money to make the granting of further loans conditional on their being employed to strengthen the army and to develop the strategic railways. He also sought to make the Balkan States absolutely dependent financially on France. In Russia the Pan-Slav movement was continually growing more clamorous. In the Near East things were looking very ominous, in spite of the treaties of peace; for these were only a temporary solution of the Balkan problems. The political frontiers drafted by them did not correspond to the ethnographical conditions and satisfied nobody. Serbia had been put off by Russia with hopes of Bosnia and Croatia, and was seeking convulsively, though in vain, to establish a closer connection with Montenegro. Bulgaria could not hope to obtain the Macedonian territory which was hers by right of nationality unless Serbia received compensation elsewhere and she was forced to surrender a part of her old territory to Roumania. Greece was already looking across from Salonica to Constantinople, and from the islands to the coasts of Asia Minor. The newly created Albanian State was torn by internal dissensions, oppressed by the greed of her neighbours north and south, and soon forced to defend herself against open attacks from Serbia. These, in the autumn, assumed the actual character of a campaign, and on October 18th caused Austria to demand the evacuation of the occupied Albanian territory within eight days. Germany was not consulted previously, but nevertheless promised to support her unconditionally even in military measures and left Russia in no doubt of the fact.[1] Turkey was still a long way from acquiescing in the loss of her European possessions.

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[1] Iswolski's reports of February 17th and March 13th, 1913. Stieve, iii. 67 and 88.

Russia, too, was far from satisfied. She had certainly given her protégés the feeling that things could only be won with the Czar's help and that only the dissolution of Austria-Hungary could provide a solution satisfactory to all parties. But these protégés hated one another, and already some of them were proclaiming that with the liberation of the Balkans Russia's mission was at an end and that they must hereafter be allowed to work out their own destiny. Bulgaria and Greece had already sought support from the Triple Alliance against Russia. The fact that in spite of France's assurance of unconditional support the authorities at St. Petersburg were reluctant to risk war with the Central Powers was clearly seen from the attitude of the Russian statesmen during the Balkan crisis. In the summer of 1913 there had been a fleeting thought of overrunning Turkey from Armenia and approaching the Straits from Asia Minor, which presumably might have been done without provoking a conflict with Austria and Germany. In Paris they shuddered at the idea of Russia reaching her ends in the Near East in this wise, without war, thereby depriving France of her last chance of reconquering Alsace-Lorraine. Poincaré let the Russians see clearly his dissatisfaction and thereby induced them to abandon this path.[1]

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[1] Memorandum for the impending conversation of the Imperial Chancellor with Sazonoff, October 20th, 1913. Note on the same, October 22nd.

The most pressing question at the moment was whether Turkey would be able to make good within her new limits or whether the dismembering process would extend even to her Asiatic possessions. Army, administration and finances, all were in a state of dissolution. Arabia's dependence on the Sultan was very slight, and its inhabitants were secretly hostile to the Turks. The west coast of Asia Minor was partially inhabited by Greeks, and southern Mesopotamia was ruled by sheiks who were almost independent. The Armenian sections of the population were striving with all their might to escape from the hated bondage of the Turk; Syria, both in race and character, was a land of a peculiar type, strongly under the influence of France and with little sentiment of loyalty towards the Turkish Sultan. If a separatist movement were once set going the consequences would be incalculable.

In Berlin it was feared that these disintegrating tendencies could not be repressed. What would be the consequences for Germany and her interests in Asia Minor, especially the Bagdad railway, if the Entente Powers arranged matters among themselves on a basis such as would give Egypt and Mesopotamia to England, Syria to France, the north coast of Asia Minor and Constantinople to Russia, the Aegean coast to Greece? Then all that would be left of Turkey's empire in Asia Minor would be some feeble and insignificant remnant in the interior, and perhaps not even that. Germany would be completely left out, as in Morocco and in Persia, in spite of all the services she had rendered to Turkish civilisation. Could she submit to that?

In the spring of 1913 there was a widespread belief that in order to maintain his Asiatic possessions the Sultan would appeal to England's protection on the ground of the Treaty of Cyprus of 1878. England would protect him, send out money and administrators, and develop her own economic interests everywhere, so that ultimately Turkey in Asia would stand in much the same relation towards England as Egypt had done since 1881. Other reports affirmed that Russia was preparing to advance from the Caucasus and nothern Persia. Already the Kaiser had commented significantly, " Preparations for the dismemberment of Turkey, which apparently is nearer than was thought. . . . Look out, lest it be accomplished without us ! " He was thinking then of Mesopotamia and the adjoining western territory as far as Alexandretta and Mersina. In May he contemplated the formation of a permanent Mediterranean division of the German fleet to be stationed off the coasts of Asia Minor and Syria. Three large battleships appeared suddenly off Mersina, which plainly indicated that Germany was resolved to protect her interests in Asia Minor.[1]

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[1] *Vide* Stieve, *Iswolski und der Weltkrieg*, p. 159, where the connection between these circumstances is correctly explained.

We went even further. In order to make sure of the support of the Triple Alliance, whatever happened, we discussed with our allies the probability of a future division of territory in Hither Asia. Germany meant to reserve for herself the central portion of Asia Minor, Aleppo, and Northern Mesopotamia, as well as the harbours of Alexandretta, Mersina and Adana. Austria was inclined to claim the Pamphylian coast; but Count Berchtold had serious misgivings, because Russia, having the north coast of Asia Minor under her control, would dominate the Straits and secure a decisive position in the Mediterranean. Italy had her eyes on Adalia, and already wanted to secure the coast and concessions for railways from there to the interior. The Entente Powers were said to have made proposals in Rome for partitioning the territories. The Italians and the Austrians were informed of our claims, accurately worked out with a map, and an understanding on the Pamphylian coast was under consideration.[2]

Our Ambassador in Constantinople, von Wangenheim, warned us that England was not likely to allow us a harbour in the eastern Mediterranean. Our economic and other interests were scattered widely over the whole territory and intensive preparation would be necessary before we could proceed to any seizure of land. A better plan would be for several Powers to help Turkey jointly, to give her money, troops and officials, the assistance not to come exclusively from one side. To allow instructors and officials of one nationality only in each part of the empire, was to prepare the way for dismemberment. On the other hand the co-operation of all the Powers would impair the efficiency of the reforms ; only Germany and England could produce good results. England, too, could not desire any division which gave Constantinople to the Russians and Mersina to the Germans. The leading Turkish statesmen desired as a solution that England and Germany together should carry out what they wanted. Their work in common here might also improve their general relations with one another.[1]

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[1] Zimmerman's note, January 16th, 1913. Bethmann to Lichnowsky, January 27th, Miquel, April 6th. Comment by the Kaiser on a despatch from the Consul-General in Tiflis on April 30th. Tirpitz report, May 15th, with comments by the Kaiser. Wangenheim, May 16th and 21st.

[2] Tschirschky to Jagow, May 18th. Despatch to Rome, May 22nd. Flotow, June 1st. Jagow's note, July 6th. Jagow to Tschirschky, July 6th. Tschirschky, July 9th. Although the strictest secrecy had been enjoined, Paris learned immediately of these transactions, evidently through Italy, *vide Rapport*, p. 375.

Shortly afterwards it was learned that Turkey had placed the reform of her entire civil service in England's hands. Seventeen high English officials were to go thither. Sir Edward Grey, however, ultimately allowed only five, and out of consideration for Russia and France, the territories of Asia Minor were not included. Lichnowsky was commissioned to express our satisfaction that England had refrained from intervening in regions where, on account of our previous services, we should claim a leading part in the reforms ; he was to advocate loyal co-operation in maintaining Asiatic Turkey. He definitely said in London that if it was a question of delimiting the spheres of interest, we must also claim our share. Sir Edward Grey replied that he, too, wished to maintain and strengthen Turkey and he thought that all the Powers ought to co-operate in doing so.[2] Russia put forward another project for grouping the six eastern vilayets in a close alliance under one Governor-General, evidently with the intention of establishing a species of protectorate over it. Count Pourtalès believed that Russia in any case looked upon the whole north coast of Asia Minor as her future property, and that it was only necessary to wait and let things come to a head, as it was known that England was not in favour of dismemberment.[3]

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[1] Wangenheim, May 21st.

[2] Jagow to Lichnowsky, May 27th. Lichnowsky, May 30th.

[3] Wangenheim, June 23rd, July 8th. Pourtalès, June 26th, July 3rd.

Jagow was clear that Germany was scarcely in a position simply to annex " large territories in the interior of Asia Minor and overrun them with Prussian functionaries and administrative organisations." A certain amount of decentralisation ought to be aimed at, Governor-Generals or Viceroys in isolated provinces, which could gradually be made into protectorates, after the Egyptian model. The collapse of Turkey must be delayed as long as possible. Every year was a gain. " But how long will these events be delayed, considering the feebleness and folly of the central Government ? " He had always believed that Turkey's incursion into European affairs was a source of weakness to her. Hence he considered it bad policy that she persisted in retaining Adrianople. He had never been able to see how strengthening Turkey in Europe was to the interest of the Triple Alliance. Turkey at present had no longer any active strength. Green flag, Pan-Islam, everything that Marschall had preached, had proved worthless. Turkey was of interest to us in so far as she must continue to exist, " until we have consolidated our position in these zones and are ready for annexing them. I should like to postpone this moment as long as possible." [1] For the reforms in Armenia the Russian and German Ambassadors at Constantinople worked out a plan, which was approved by Bethmann and Sazonoff when they met. On November 5th the document was ready. Undoubtedly Germany desired the partitioning of Turkey in Asia neither then nor within measurable distance of time. No plans of conquest were being cherished ; but she had no desire to be thrust aside should others bring about a dismemberment. The fact that Germany had announced her claims in that event had manifestly strengthened the wish of the Entente Powers, England especially, to maintain Turkey as long as possible.

The problem of Asia Minor involved that of the Straits. In Berlin they were perfectly aware that Russia, now as before, was striving to secure the virtual control of the Straits and the closing of the Black Sea, and would only maintain and defend Turkey as long as she submitted to Russian influence. It was therefore not without significance that Germany, at the Sultan's request, sent out not merely military instructors for the organisation of the Turkish army—just as the navy was to be reorganised by English naval officers—but also consented to a German General, Liman von Sanders, being appointed head of the Turkish army corps at Constantinople. The three neighbouring divisions and also a large number of regiments throughout the country were to be placed under German leaders, and the principal posts on the General Staff and in the military schools were all to be filled by Germans. General Liman had very extensive powers and corresponding penal jurisdiction (15th November).[1]

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[1] Jagow to Wangenheim, July 28th.

To the Russians this seemed highly dangerous. They were far from wishing to see a really strong and reliable Turkish army, and even further from wanting a German command on the Bosphorus. The Russian Ambassador, they declared, could not remain in a town with a German garrison. On November 18th the Russian Secretary of State, Kokovzov, explained to the Kaiser and the Imperial Chancellor in Berlin the objection of his Government, and requested that only instructors without the authority of command should be sent, and stationed, if possible, in Asia Minor. The Kaiser, however, declared that for the reorganisation of the army the authority of a command was indispensable.[2]

Russia thereupon turned to Paris and London and asked if they could not jointly put pressure upon the Sultan and if necessary demand compensations (26th November). In Paris they welcomed the idea, but Grey thought it better to make friendly remonstrances in Berlin. When Kühlmann reminded Grey that an English Admiral was in command of the Turkish fleet (December 9th), Sir Edward was somewhat taken aback, and promised to inquire into his credentials. He ascertained that the Admiral exercised an actual command of wide extent. He had previously not been inclined to yield to the Russian pressure for a species of ultimatum in Constantinople, and he now only required that the Turkish Government should be asked by the Entente Ambassadors, verbally and individually, an apparently harmless question, to the effect that it was presumed that Turkey had not entrusted to the German General any full powers which would affect the independence of the Turkish Government or the freedom of the Straits, and a desire was expressed to be informed of the terms of his appointment.

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[1] Cf. Siebert, p. 639. German White Book, p. 159.

[2] Bethmann's note, November 18th and 19th. Lucius, November 22nd and 28th.

This question was submitted in Constantinople on December 13th, and the reply stated that the General was in command of the first army corps, but that he had no authority over the fortresses in the Straits nor for securing order in the capital. Even if a state of siege should come about, he would even then not receive the command without further consideration (15th December).

The Russians were very sore at the watering down of the ultimatum, as they had planned it, by Grey. Sazonoff declared that, if it was necessary to modify their attitude again, as had already happened in several other questions, it was solely due "to the lack of confidence in the effectiveness of English support. This want of solidarity among the Entente Powers causes grave anxiety in St. Petersburg, for it constitutes an organic weakness in the Triple Entente, which places us always at a disadvantage with the firm bloc of the Triple Alliance." He expressed himself in similar language to the English Ambassador, at which Sir Edward Grey was "very much upset."

The Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, who considered that they ought always to be equipped and ready for an armed contest with Turkey, advised secretly supplying the Armenians with arms and reinforcing the troops on the Caucasus front. In Paris the tone was persistently provocative; the Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed his complete solidarity with Russia and urged taking energetic steps. Indeed, they even unofficially endeavoured to get Russia to station a battleship off Constantinople, and not to withdraw it until Liman had disappeared. The Turks would not dare to fire upon it. The desire was to prepare a Turkish Agadir for Germany. Public opinion in France would heartily approve, so Iswolski thought. They also attempted to force Russia into threatening steps in Berlin, and Poincaré himself declared in the most definite way that France, in spite of her desire for peace, would not avoid the duties imposed by the alliance should serious complications ensue. Sazonoff proposed early in January, 1914, to occupy several Turkish harbours, as soon as they were certain of English support.[1] In Berlin they wanted to avoid any conflict. Although the Entente press made a peaceful solution more difficult, by representing the proceedings of their Governments towards the Sultan as threats to Germany, the Kaiser finally consented that Liman should give up the command of the first army corps, but should remain Inspector-General of the Army and Director of the Military Schools. To this the Sultan agreed. Sazonoff's suspicions were not yet allayed; but the Czar declared himself satisfied, and so the danger passed over once more.

It was characteristic of this incident that France's urgency was countered by England's reserve, and that Russia at every move looked furtively to London and was very much displeased not to meet there with unconditional support. Evidently Russia and France would not have hesitated to bring about war for this insignificant matter had they been sure that England would join them. In December, when this question first came up, Sazonoff laid before the Czar a memorandum dealing with the future treatment of the Straits. It was therein affirmed that Russia's historic task was the control of the Straits either by occupation, or by the possession of important fortified positions, or by some other means. On no account could she rest satisfied with merely neutralising the Straits or granting free passage to ships of all nationalities, as enemy fleets of superior strength could then penetrate the Black Sea. The probability was that the problem of the Straits would be settled by a European war. The possibility and success of military measures would depend essentially on the international situation. "To prepare a favourable political soil for it is for the present the deliberate aim of the Foreign Ministry." But the military and technical conditions and possibilities had also to be accurately tested.

The Czar approved all this, the experts stated their views, and on February 21st, 1914, Sazonoff presided at a great discussion held by the leading political and military authorities. Here decisions were reached as to the disposition of ships for the transport of the troops, as to the completion of the Caucasian railway so as to be able to attack Turkey from that direction also, and as to the number and equipment of the South Russian troops destined for the expedition, always on the definite assumption that everything might happen within a very short time. But when Sazonoff again indicated that the matter would probably be carried through during a great European war, the Chief of the General Staff raised objections. In the event of Russia taking part in such a war, he said, her whole strength would be needed on the western frontiers where the real decision would inevitably lie, and consequently there would not be a sufficient quantity of troops available for an attack on Constantinople. The plan of reserving from the outset a special army group for this expedition, as provided for in the plan of mobilisation, he described as impossible.[1] A further great difficulty was the lack of suitable transports in the Black Sea. Finally a programme was drafted containing six items, but all the prospective measures involved in this required considerable time to carry out.[2] If we regard these proceedings dispassionately, I believe we must come to the conclusion that the leading authorities in Russia, through these deliberations, had arrived at a clear realisation of the difficulties of such an undertaking and that it had shown them unmistakably the necessity of a longer period for preparation. They could not wish a great war to break out before they were ready.

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[1] Iswolski's reports of January 5th and 15th, 1914. Stieve, iv. 17 and 25. Report of the proceedings of the Russian special conference of January 13th, 1914 (December 31st, 1913). Stieve, *Iswolski und der Weltkrieg*, p. 234. Sazonoff's memorandum of January 6th. German White Book, p. 160.

One would naturally have expected that if Sazonoff regarded the mastery of the Straits as the principal object of Russian policy, he would seek to ascertain beforehand the probable attitude of Germany and Austria. When he visited the Imperial Chancellor at Berlin in November, 1913, he discussed with him Serbia, Albania, Greece, Asiatic Turkey and Armenia, but said not a word of Russia's plan for the Straits. Probably he considered the fact that Germany had sent Liman to Turkey as a sign that Germany was not prepared to leave the Straits in the hands of Russia.

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[1] According to General Dobrorolski (*Die Mobilmachung der russischer Armee*, p. 15), the whole of the war-material which had at an earlier date been prepared for such an expedition, was sent to Manchuria in 1904 and 1905 and subsequently not replaced.

[2] *Vide* the memorandum of December 8th and the report, *Documents from the Russian Secret Archives*, p. 308, and Stieve, *Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, iii. 374, and *Iswolski und der Weltkrieg*, p. 247.

Certainly in March, 1914, they made indirect inquiries. The Russian Ambassador in Constantinople, M. de Giers, who was looked upon by many as Sazonoff's probable successor, and had taken part in the deliberations in St. Petersburg in February, took the chance of a conversation with the German Ambassador, Wangenheim, to say that, in his opinion, the time had now come when Germany and Russia could again work together and ought to do so. Neither of them had any interest in seeing Asia Minor partitioned ; Russia would then be obliged to take Constantinople, which would lead to difficulties with England ; it would also make Germany an immediate frontier neighbour in Asia Minor, which might prove a source of friction. Russia's best and easiest way of controlling the Straits was by maintaining a Turkish Government under her influence. Both Powers could thus work very well jointly in Constantinople. Whether the French got Alsace-Lorraine was a matter of indifference to Russia. The one vital difficulty was Germany's support of Austria's Balkan policy. The leadership of the Triple Alliance was now in Vienna. Austria had carried through the exclusion of Serbia from the Adriatic and had brought about the failure of the Albanian experiment, while her intrigues in the Balkans were a perpetual menace to the peace of the world. "If a serious dispute ever arose between Germany and Russia, Austria would be the cause of it." His ideal was a Russo-German agreement in which both parties bound themselves, without injury to their existing treaty engagements, in the event of a dispute between one of the countries and an ally of the other, to rely on intervention to allay the strife. He also wished that Germany would guarantee Russia free passage through the Straits, which would secure the Turks against the misuse of this right and at the same time preserve their territorial integrity. In return Russia would offer no obstacles to Germany's economic activity in Asia Minor.

Wangenheim regarded these overtures as a temporary means of winning greater influence through Germany's aid over the Turkish Government, which was somewhat suspicious of Russia. Otherwise he felt Giers was living on illusions ; it remained to be seen what he would do if he became Minister. The seething ferment in the Russian people might prove stronger than the influence of the authorities. No reply came from Germany to this proposal.[1]

Germany, at that time, wished Austria to come to an understanding with Serbia, Greece, Turkey and Roumania. Wangenheim again drew attention to the fact that it would be difficult to bring about an agreement between Greece and Turkey, because the quarrel over the northern islands of the Aegean Sea was still unsettled, and because Greece was really still scheming for the possession of Constantinople. It would be difficult for Greece and Bulgaria to come to terms, as the latter was still smarting from the loss of Kavalla. The Turks and Austrians were eager for Bulgaria to join them, because she was the only State which would prove dangerous to Turkey on land, and because she would fall entirely under Russian influence if she met with no response from the Triple Alliance. They also wished to retain Roumania, whereas on the other side Magyar intolerance towards the Roumanians living in Hungary strengthened the dislike in Bucharest for the Danube State and the feeling in favour of Russia. So long as the Kaiser supported Greece, the Ambassador could not think of any reasonable solution. He remarked plaintively, "we cannot catch fish in the troubled waters of the Eastern question without getting our fingers wet. We shall find that out yet." [2]

If, in spite of these difficulties, the Russian overture for an understanding was left unregarded, it was largely because meanwhile there had been a considerable *rapprochement* with England, and there was a desire to avoid doing anything in the East that might give offence in London.

Since Haldane's visit to Germany in February, 1912, there had been negotiations for a colonial agreement. Although much of what had then been intended had been abandoned in consequence of the opposition from the British Colonial Office, some points of constant friction were reserved for further discussion, in which, besides the Ambassadors Wolff-Metternich, Marschall, and Lichnowsky, von Kühlmann, the Counsellor of the Embassy, took an important part.

The first of these was the future of the Portuguese colonies in

[1] Wangenheim, March 26th, 1914. Cf. March 10th, 1915.

[2] Wangenheim to Jagow, May 7th. Memorandum of May 9th.

Africa. The agreement concluded in 1898 still held good, but the delimitation of the spheres of influence no longer satisfied either side. Moreover, they were quite convinced in Berlin that before long the treaty would cease to be of any practical value so far as concerned any expectations of the voluntary mortgaging of these colonies by Portugal. Rosen, the German Ambassador in Lisbon, urgently cautioned his Government against overestimating Portugal's financial weakness, and stated that there were other sources of income which would serve as security for loans, besides the revenues of these colonies.[1]

Early in 1913 it was arranged to modify the frontier of Mozambique slightly in favour of England, and that of Angola in favour of Germany, and draft differently the conditions for occupying the territory. England was willing to regard as a dead letter her defensive treaty with Portugal renewed in 1899, regarding her African possessions, if the latter detached themselves from the mother country. Germany also desired that England should promise not to come to the aid of Portugal, if through mismanagement in her colonies other Powers were compelled to interfere. After some hesitation Grey consented to make this declaration, not explicitly but implicitly, in a special supplementary treaty. It was also decided to oppose jointly any interference from a third Power " whether this interference took the form of a loan to Portugal in return for a mortgage on the revenue of these provinces," or through the indirect acquisition of part of these territories, or by some other means. Germany declared that she had no interest in the fate of the island of Timor, England in the islands of San Thomé and Principe. It was also settled that as soon as one part of one of the two great colonies came into possession of England or Germany, the other party would have the right of occupying the share of the colony destined for it. Grey certainly stipulated that the new treaty should be passed by Parliament and published ; also he wanted to make public the so-called Windsor Treaty of 1899, and the older Anglo-German agreement of 1898. But the German Government objected to this, and finally it was decided merely to 'paraph' the treaty for the present, *i.e.* the negotiators should sign their names by initial letters only ; the question of submitting the treaty to Parliament and publishing was not to be settled until agreement had been reached as to the time limit. After lengthy discussion over the text, the paraphing was completed on October 20th, 1913.[1]

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[1] Rosen, January 20th, 1913.

In the following spring the German Government attempted to carry through the formal conclusion of the treaty without waiting for it to be made public, as planned by England. This Grey refused, as he had promised not to conclude any secret treaties, and he declared that until ratified by Parliament the earlier treaty would remain valid. Lichnowsky, supported by Rosen, urged acceptance of the English conditions, *i.e.* the conclusion and publication of all three treaties; but it was not till he was in Berlin early in July, 1914, that he obtained the Imperial Chancellor's consent on condition that the publication did not take place till the late autumn. Jagow was opposed to this also, and frankly showed his displeasure at Lichnowsky being too complaisant to the English.[2]

A second important matter, the completion of the Bagdad railway, was discussed at the same time. After a preliminary arrangement had been signed with France (February, 1914), and after long and tedious negotiations between Germany and England, it was agreed that the German Bagdad Railway Company should renounce its existing right to the building of the final stretch from Basra to the Persian Gulf. It was to be constructed only after an understanding had been reached by the German, English and Turkish Governments. The harbours of Bagdad and Basra were to be built by a Turkish company, England to be allowed up to 40 per cent. of the shares. Germany was neither to obtain a harbour nor a railway station on the Gulf without a previous understanding with England, nor was she to have a financial interest in the construction. England pledged herself neither to build nor to finance a rival line to the Bagdad railway. Germany recognised the rights conceded by Turkey in March, 1913, to an English company for shipping on the Euphrates and the Tigris. The Bagdad Railway Company was to be allotted 40 per cent. of the share capital originally reserved for Turkey (20 per cent. of the entire capital of this company). As soon as the railway to Basra was completed, the financial support guaranteed by Turkey to the Bagdad Railway Company was to cease. Both Powers were to be responsible for the maintenance of permanent sailings from Basra to the Gulf. In the event of the final section being completed, any differentiation of treatment in the handling of through traffic, both passenger and goods, was to be prohibited.

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[1] *Vide* Lichnowsky, January 17th, March 20th, May 13th, July 2nd, 17th, 28th. Jagow to Solf, February 12th; to Lichnowsky, June 30th, July 21st; to Treutler, August 4th.

[2] Lichnowsky, January 29th, February 7th, March 1st, 7th, 26th, April 1st, May 23rd, June 4th, July 14th. Rosen's opinion, May 30th. Jagow to Lichnowsky, May 29th, July 25th and 27th

After a few unimportant emendations of the text this treaty was paraphed in London on June 15th, 1914, and immediately thereafter submitted to the Kaiser and approved. The final signature was delayed on Germany's side until an arrangement had been come to with Turkey as to the financial security for the construction of the line to Basra. But as there were obstacles in the way of these negotiations, Bethmann, in view of the great world crisis then imminent, ordered the treaty to be concluded at once. This was done on July 27th, and it was forwarded to Lichnowsky on the 30th. When it reached London the declaration of war had been virtually decided, and the outbreak of the struggle put an end to these efforts for a settlement.

These negotiations were intended by the Imperial Chancellor and Lichnowsky not merely to remove various subjects of dispute, but much rather to create a community of interest between Germany and England in South Africa and Asia Minor, and eventually to prepare the ground for the defence of these interests against any third party. It was in such fashion that the Anglo-French and the Anglo-Russian Ententes had begun. It was hoped that later on there would follow an agreement as to the Straits and the Balkans. The conclusion of these treaties, Lichnowsky insisted, was a sign that the English statesmen did not wish to stand in the way of Germany's colonial development so far as it did not injure English interests.

In Paris and St. Petersburg the success of the *rapprochement* was viewed with acute anxiety. England duly notified the other Powers as to the leading features of the agreement and gave them the comforting assurance that England's relations with her allies were in nowise affected. Nevertheless, this turn of events was far from welcome. Russia's convulsive efforts in the spring of 1914 to transform the Entente with England into a formal alliance doubtless proceeded from the wish to bind England more firmly and to prevent coquetting with Germany. When King George, accompanied by Sir Edward Grey, visited Paris at the end of April, 1914, Doumergue, at Russia's request, brought up this question. He was astonished, when he broached the matter of a naval convention with Russia, to find Grey personally in favour of it. The Russians were now informed of the exchange of letters between Cambon and Grey in November, 1912.

Once the Cabinet had sanctioned Grey's proposal, the negotiations for a naval convention began and were conducted very unobtrusively by the Naval Attachés.[1] On the English side no special eagerness was shown ; Russia and France were throughout the active parties. No real unity had been reached ; in particular Russia's request for the despatch of English transports to the Baltic had not yet been settled, when rumours of these transactions got abroad. There was great excitement in the German press, and Grey had even to answer a question in Parliament as to whether a naval convention had been negotiated with Russia (June, 1914). He evaded a direct answer, but stated that there were no secret treaties which could affect England's liberty of action should war break out, nor would such be negotiated. He told Lichnowsky that the Straits question had not been discussed with Russia for the last five years, and that there was no alliance but very close political sympathy, which was free from animus against Germany.[2] At the beginning of July the Russian Ambassador was afraid that these proceedings might block the negotiations, as Grey could scarcely at the same time deny them and negotiate. As a matter of fact, the convention had not been concluded by the time the war broke out. The English Government had evidently entered upon these deliberations in a dilatory and half-hearted fashion to avoid offending their allies, while at the same time endeavouring to find out how far the *rapprochement* with Germany was likely to go.

It is obvious that this development of English policy did not arise from any feeling of goodwill for Germany. Grey and his colleagues were as far removed from sentimental motives as Salisbury and Chamberlain in their day. It was mainly due to two causes, the desire to avert a war between the groups of Powers, both the business world and the great majority of the population being against war, and the natural striving of English policy to recapture its old position as arbitrator between these groups. I have already explicitly referred to the significance and efficacy of this last motive. Naturally, they neither could nor would discard their relations with Russia, and of course with France, nor even loosen them so long as they feared that Germany, if sure of England's neutrality, might use the first opportunity to attack the Dual Alliance and destroy it utterly by means of her superior military and economic strength. That this fear was groundless, that Germany did not want war even if she could have counted on England's neutrality, and that the attack was likely to come from the other side, is shown by the trend of our policy in the preceding years and by every utterance of our responsible statesmen. But that these suspicions were harboured in England, that people there attached far too much importance to the influence of the army, and to the Pan-German circles which were more noisy than really anxious for war, that by applying unjustly their own special conditions to other circumstances, they believed that Germany, by increasing her land armaments, was responsible for the general armaments race—just as the increase in her naval armaments had actually led to the strengthening of the British fleet—these are all facts, and it is only by bearing these motives in mind that English policy can be rightly judged.

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[1] Cf. Siebert, p. 806. Cf. also Stieve, *Iswolski und der Weltkrieg*, p. 193.

[2] Lichnowsky, June 24th, 1914.

During 1913 and the spring of 1914 indirect attempts were repeatedly made from the English side to bring about a naval agreement. Tirpitz's speech in the Reichstag early in February, 1913, offering to accept for Germany the proportion of large battleships as 10 to 16, seemed to afford a suitable basis. On the other hand, Germany declined the proposal so ardently advocated by Churchill, of a year's truce from naval construction, as unpractical (10th February, 1914). It would have meant for both sides the dockyards lying idle and unemployment difficulties. As the proposals for fixing the proportion of ships as above mentioned were submitted to England and not accepted, the negotiations came to a standstill.[1]

England thought she might be able to draw closer to Germany carefully and slowly without losing touch with her present friends. In the summer of 1914 Lichnowsky had again emphasised the fact that in war between us and France, England would certainly be on the side of France. But in Berlin they did not quite believe that. On February 26th, 1914, Jagow wrote to the Ambassador, "I think you are inclined to look on the dark side of things, as when you express the view that no matter what happens, in the event of war, England will be on the side of France, against us. After all, we have not built our fleet in vain, and it is my conviction that, in a given event, England will consider the question very seriously whether it is quite so simple and so safe after all to play the guardian angel to France."

The idea that we could reckon in a big war on England's neutrality, all the more so as we were then in the act of settling important colonial matters with her, and the hope of being able also to come to an arrangement with England as regards the Near East, probably led to Russia's last overture regarding the Straits being left without a response. Germany's reserved attitude towards the inquiries instituted by Giers had certainly strengthened the conviction of the party in St. Petersburg which had for some considerable time past regarded the German Empire as Russia's real opponent in the East, and which believed that the road to Constantinople ran through Berlin.

In the summer of 1914 there did not seem to be any special immediate danger threatening, beyond of course the general feeling of insecurity of recent years. But the feverish increase of armaments was an ominous sign. Since 1909 Russia had toiled unremittingly not merely to restore her military capacity, but to develop it to the utmost. The army and the navy were increased, the fortresses and railways, especially on the western frontiers, were being, at France's instigation, continually extended; and constantly increasing numbers of troops were permanently stationed along the German and Austrian frontiers. In 1909 France had created 46 new artillery regiments, in 1912 she had brought her cavalry up to a corresponding strength; she had increased permanently her navy and her air service, and in her colonies she had built up a black army, the strength of which no one knew. Finally, in 1913, she introduced the three years' military service and thereby added powerfully to her land forces. Under these circumstances Germany could not stand still. She had to prepare herself to meet a war on two fronts alone; her very existence was at stake. The laws of 1911 and 1912 increased the number of yearly recruits and provided for the development of the technical side of war. But after the principles here laid down had been fully carried out, Germany's troops would have remained numerically far behind the armies of her neighbouring Powers. In the summer of 1914 Russia alone, whether the war strength or the peace strength of her army be considered, could dispose of a force that was numerically superior to the combined armies of Germany and Austria.[1]

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[1] For further enlightenment on this unsuccessful effort, *vide* Tirpitz, *Dokumente*, p. 367.

In France the ruling party asserted incessantly that Germany was aiming at a permanent hegemony of Europe and at further reducing and weakening the Republic, indeed that she was only waiting for the moment when she could fall upon her unmolested. In 1905, and again in 1911, this had been intended, but had been wrecked by England's threatening attitude. That this, objectively considered, was false, did not alter the fact that in France people partly believed, partly pretended to believe it, and thereby engendered an embittered feeling among the peace-loving population which was easily worked up, when the moment arrived, to an absolute enthusiasm for war. In November, 1912, when Poincaré said to the German Ambassador, it was a horrible idea that France and Germany should think of going to war on account of the Eastern question, which did not affect their vital interests, Herr von Schön felt inclined to believe in the sincerity of his words; but in his report he added the warning that if war came about, France would risk the great throw, confident in her newly reinforced army, "in the hope of a victorious solution of the forty years' old problem that lies between France and us." [2]

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[1] Cf. Montgelas, *Leitfaden zur Kriegsschuldfrage*, p. 81.

[2] Schön, November 10th, 1912.

There was, no doubt, a strong inclination in France also to live in peace with Germany and leave the past alone. The Socialists, with Jaurès at their head, were the main champions of this view; but leading men of the bourgeois Left, such as Caillaux and Combes, also held it. They were so strong that in the summer of 1914 they brought about a change of Ministry; for a brief time it seemed as if the majority in the Chamber would refuse to trust any new Foreign Minister who would not pledge himself to revoke the three years' military service. Maurice Paléologue, then Ambassador at St. Petersburg, relates in his *Memoirs* how strongly he opposed this, being in Paris at the time, and how he told everyone that such a decision would mean the end of the Russian alliance and would condemn France to political impotence. He advocated the view that war was unavoidable in the near future, but was silent as to the reasons which were to bring it about. His information was probably influenced by the martial mood of the Pan-Slavs and the Grand Ducal party in St. Petersburg, and also by Poincaré and his circle in Paris.

In Russia the leading statesmen certainly always affirmed their belief in Germany's peaceful intentions; but in the autumn of 1913 Sazonoff said to our chargé-d'affaires that "they were afraid of a policy of surprises" on the part of Austria and did not consider Germany strong enough to hold her ally in check. "Austria always faces her allies with a *fait accompli*, and they are then compelled *de faire l'honneur à leur signature*." [1]

In Berlin they were very sceptical about Russia's real intentions. In 1909 Captain von Hintze, as we have seen, expressed his conviction that Russia would advance against us as soon as her armaments were completed, and merely wanted to keep us in suspense till then. The Kaiser had concurred in this view, whereas our Ambassador, Count Pourtalès, disputed it. But during the Balkan crisis in 1912-1913 the Pan-Slav movement had grown so strong that Pourtalès too thought that if Austria invaded Serbia the Czar would be compelled to attack. "The question whether such a war would really serve Russia's interests would be just as little considered as the dangers within the empire to which Russia would certainly be exposed in a war." [2] In the spring of 1914 he certainly doubted if Russia was working

[1] Lucius, October 28th, 1913.

[2] Pourtalès, February 6th, 1913.

deliberately for war, as there were no leading personalities for the conduct of concerted action on a large scale; but he admitted that the feeble Czar might at any moment be carried away by the Pan-Slav party. Also, an article in a semi-official Russian paper, to the effect that Russia was ready for war and France ought to be so too, confirmed him in this view. But the Kaiser thought otherwise. He felt that Pourtalès' report was contradictory. "As a soldier," he wrote, "I feel, from all the information received, not the slightest doubt that Russia is systematically preparing war against us and I shape my policy accordingly." To a remark of the Ambassador's that no one could see from three to four years into the future, he added the characteristic comment, "The gift sometimes occurs. Among Sovereigns frequently, among statesmen seldom, among diplomatists almost never!"[1] He evidently believed he possessed it—had he only had even a little! The Imperial Chancellor was indeed nervous at the tone of the Russian press and thought that "of all the European Great Powers, Russia is most inclined to face the risk of a great military adventure." But in June, 1914, he was still far from believing in any immediate intention of war, although he was convinced that some ordinary and possibly quite subordinate clash of interests between Russia and Austria-Hungary might suffice to light the torch of war.[2] In talking to the Bavarian Ambassador he rejected outright any idea of a preventive war at this time.[3] The Austrian heir to the throne had no doubt about Russia's evil intentions, but thought there was no cause for alarm, "the internal difficulties are too great to permit of an aggressive policy for that country."[4]

So far as one can judge from the evidence now available, the truth seems to be that the ruling circles in Russia did not want war in any case, and consequently had no definite moment for it in view, but that at the same time they believed war to be unavoidable before long. The decisive factor was not so much hatred of Germany among large sections of the people, or the belief that

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[1] Pourtalès to Jagow, March 6th, 11th, 16th, 1914. Kaiser's comments on the report of March 11th.

[2] Bethmann to Lichnowsky, June 16th.

[3] June 4th. *Bayrische Dokumente zum Kriegsansbruch*, p. 2. He said: "The Kaiser has not favoured and will not favour a preventive war."

[4] Treutler's note on the meeting at Konopischt, June 15th.

Germany was blocking the way to Constantinople—which was certainly not the case—but the expectation that the Austro-Hungarian bundle of nationalities would fall apart on the death of the aged Emperor. As we know, this view had long been held in London, probably also in Paris and Rome, indeed it was very common in Germany too. It was thought that the death of Francis Joseph, now eighty-four, would be the signal for a redistribution of the States lying in the basin of the Danube and to the north-west of the Balkan Peninsula. This is the contingency, so I believe, on which were based the promises so often made to the Serbians that they would get " much land " at the expense of the Hapsburg Monarchy. The Roumanians, whom Russia in the spring of 1914, in spite of King Charles' opposition, had largely succeeded in winning over, were also counting on this event. There is no doubt that Russia's programme for the future included the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; it is an open question whether Russia was aiming at its dissolution by a great war deliberately brought about, or was expecting its collapse at a change of government, which is my opinion, and was willing to provoke it and exploit it as soon as the right moment came, though not to force the pace by artificial means. Hence, the peaceful assurances to Germany were not altogether insincere. It was not impossible that an understanding might be reached with Berlin by friendly means on the collapse of the Dual Monarchy, once the Austro-German alliance had been dissolved by the pressure of facts. If this were so, it was important for Germany to avoid premature conflicts till it was seen what was to become of Austria after the old Emperor's death.

In any case Russia's views were regarded in Berlin with deep distrust, even more so by the Kaiser than by his diplomatists. It was felt that any unforeseen accident in the Balkans might rekindle the danger of war so fortunately averted in 1909 and again in 1912-1913. Nor was there any doubt that France would support Russia whatever happened. There was some consolation in the knowledge that Russia's own preparations for war were not complete.

On the other hand the Imperial Chancellor was very hopeful of the new relations established with England. He considered that it lay with Germany and England whether a new general war should break out over the Balkan question.

> "If we both then stand resolute as guardians of the peace of Europe, which neither the obligations towards the Triple Alliance nor those towards the Entente prevent us from doing, if from the outset we work for this end with a concerted plan, the war will be prevented."

But England ought not, in that case, to encourage Russian Chauvinism by concluding a naval convention, or in any other way.[1] Lichnowsky, who was to bring up these matters prudently with Grey, sent word on July 24th, 1914, that Sir Edward also wished for closer relations, and declared that neither Russia nor France had the slightest desire for war. But it was not without significance that Grey also emphasised the fact that England's relations with Russia and France were very intimate, and Sazonoff wished "to a certain extent, as counterpoise to the solidly welded block of the Triple Alliance, to bring the Triple Entente forward somewhat more prominently." As we know already, Lichnowsky again and again reminded Berlin that if there was a war with France England would intervene actively on her behalf.

Here too, then, the ground was insecure, and they knew it in Berlin, or ought to have done so. But what of the "solidly welded block" of the Triple Alliance? In Berlin and in Vienna also they had long felt that in the event of war they could not reckon confidently on Italy. It was an ominous sign when Italy announced, towards the close of 1912, that she could not continue the previous arrangement whereby she had promised in the event of a Franco-German war to send troops over the Brenner Pass to reinforce the German front in Alsace-Lorraine.[2] General Conrad considered this a triumphant vindication of his old distrust, and was far from being reassured by the further declaration that the entire Italian army would be stationed on the Mediterranean coast against France. Altogether in Vienna they viewed Italy with extreme aversion, always fearing that she might attack from the rear in a Balkan war. It had been accidentally disclosed that during the Bosnian crisis of 1909 secret orders for mobilisation had been issued in the North Italian provinces, which, in the situation then existing, could only have been directed against Austria. In Berlin Italy was generally regarded as hesitating and unreliable, but in Austria as a secret enemy—an attitude that made its influence felt in Vienna during the fateful days of July, 1914.

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[1] Bethmann to Lichnowsky, June 16th.

[2] Pribram, i. 299.

But what about the Austro-German alliance? That Austria required it is obvious, as otherwise she was at the mercy of Russia. Germany at an emergency might have done without it; indeed by renouncing it she might have improved her own position, and placed her relations with Russia on an entirely different basis. Lichnowsky, who knew Austria well, was the one among the German diplomatists who regarded this alliance with the utmost scepticism and sometimes stated this fact with considerable plainness of speech; and even Herr von Tschirschky, long German Ambassador in Vienna, wrote on May 22nd, 1914, to von Jagow that he often asked himself " if it really pays to attach ourselves so firmly to this ramshackle State and continue the toilsome task of carrying it along with us. But I see no other political combination which we could substitute for it. For without this alliance our policy would be forced to aim at a dismemberment of the Monarchy." It was doubtful if England would allow this and whether it would be advantageous for us. " The fruit must be allowed to ripen, it seems to me." He did not know if the heir to the throne had a definite plan of reforms, and, if that were so, whether his methods would prove efficacious. If this were not the case, decentralisation would be very rapid and we should have to shape our policy accordingly.

But in Berlin there was no one with the courage and strength to alter the course completely. One would naturally imagine that in an alliance with a State as to whose stability and vigour there were well-founded doubts, Germany would play the larger and therefore the leading part; but, as we have already seen, this was not the case. In all Balkan questions since 1908 Austria had acted entirely by herself without consulting us previously, indeed often without even informing us, and had then requested our unconditional support of her measures against the rest of the world, however hazardous they might be. We had on repeated occasions afforded this cover even at the risk of a war, in order that we might not lose the last ally we were sure of. Just as the speed of a fleet depends on the efficiency of its weakest vessel, and hence the weakest and not the strongest ship determines all separate measures, so long as it has to be included, so the weaker ally determines the general policy of a coalition so long as the stronger member is not willing to withdraw from him. We have already heard General von Moltke deplore this dependence on Austria, but in the Wilhelmstrasse they did not seem to realise clearly the danger lurking in our association with Austria's aimless and purely negative Balkan policy. The results of the Kaiser's interviews in Vienna (March 23rd) with the Emperor Francis Joseph and with the heir to the throne, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, at Konopischt (June 11th to 14th) aimed only in appearance at a complete understanding as to the Balkan policy of both Powers. The Austrian Emperor and his heir gave their consent to the German standpoint that Roumania must be retained for the Triple Alliance without fail; but the official policy of the Austrian Government remained directed towards winning over Bulgaria in spite of the Archduke's personal dislike of the Czar Ferdinand.[1]

The internal affairs of the Danube Monarchy were steadily growing worse. The efforts of the Slavs to obtain a larger measure of autonomy caused the heir-apparent the utmost anxiety and earned his hostility. In Hungary the South Slavs and the Roumanians were treated by the Magyar nobility without the slightest consideration, and the Magyars at the same time were themselves aiming at greater influence within the Dual Monarchy. In Count Tisza they had a highly gifted, strong-willed and fearless leader. He had made an extraordinary impression on the Kaiser during the latter's visit to Vienna, but was regarded by the heir to the throne with unconcealed aversion. He remarked to the Kaiser that Tisza was already Dictator in Hungary and wanted to be the same in Vienna, "Vienna begins quaking when Tisza sets out on his journey and when he arrives in Vienna they all grovel before him." Francis Ferdinand was then said to be pursuing the plan for setting aside the dualism existing since 1867, which was founded on the German-Magyar supremacy in the Danube State, and for transforming it into a league of nationalities with equal rights under the Hapsburg sceptre. Serbia and Roumania were to be incorporated by peaceful means. It seems to me questionable if he actually had such definite plans, especially as he would then have had to concede equality of rights to the Poles and the Chechs, which he was obviously unwilling to do ; and it seems to me even more questionable if such plans were feasible at all, anyhow without a great war with Russia. Certainly had the heir to the throne obtained power he would have prosecuted energetically the struggle against the Magyars' exceptional position and thereby have come into sharp conflict with Tisza.[1] As soon as the aged Emperor died, serious internal struggles were sure to take place. The outcome and consequences of these no one could foresee ; but in any case they were bound to absorb the country's entire energies for a long time to come, and to cripple and enfeeble all outside activities. How could Germany expect active support from her when she was already involved in a difficult struggle for her own interests ? Ought she not rather to have dreaded being swept into the currents from this neighbouring State, with their disturbing effects on the great problems of south-eastern Europe ?

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[1] Tschirschky's report, March 23rd, and Treutler's, June 14th, in Montgelas, *Leitfaden zur Kriegsschuldfrage*, pp. 189-194.

Worst of all, we were not even sure of this weak and dangerous ally. Soon after his accession to office, Bethmann said to the Kaiser that if war came about it was to be hoped that the first attack would be on Austria, " who would then require our help, and not on us, so that loyalty to the alliance would depend on Austria's decision." [2] Evidently he felt no confidence that this loyalty would be in any case available.

This, then, was Germany's position ; her only sure ally, Austria, was weak and, because of her incalculable Balkan policy, a source of danger. Her second ally, Italy, was at least unreliable, and a third, Roumania, was moving, as yet secretly, towards the enemy ; and there were no new allies in sight. There was no immediate fear of an attack from the Russian side, but at any moment some insignificant incident might render it possible ; then Russia was sure of help from her ally, France, and from

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[1] *Vide* Schüssler's *Osterreich und das Deutsche Schicksal* (1925), for a lively picture of the hostility between the Austrian heir-apparent and Tisza, but I think the Archduke's plans are made too definite and their practicability exaggerated.

[2] Bethmann to the Kaiser, September 15th, 1910.

England too, once the Republic was involved in war. From England nothing further was to be expected than that she would exert a moderating influence, and would possibly, in conjunction with Germany, do her utmost to prevent war breaking out; but she never led us to expect that she would join our side or even remain neutral if, in spite of such efforts, war actually came about. Nor could she do so, as that would have been absolutely counter to her own interests. For it was highly probable that Germany and Austria would defeat France and Russia. That would have destroyed the Entente and have secured Germany's predominant position on the Continent for a long time to come, two things in which England would never acquiesce. She did not wish the Entente, this valuable tool for preventing Germany from becoming too powerful, to be shattered. And so the position on the Entente side was similar to that of the Triple Alliance; the weaker ships set the course, not the strongest. England was the strongest of the Entente Powers; without her help victory was impossible. But England, in spite of that, had to bow to the will of the weaker allies, as soon as these threatened to fall away from the Entente because it was of no value to them if London held aloof at the critical moment. Such voices had made themselves heard frequently in Russia. If Russia or France demanded it, England must fight or the Entente be at an end, and all the results of this toilsome policy of the balance of power for the last ten years be lost. Whether Grey and his colleagues realised their position to its fullest extent; whether, realising it, they sought to draw nearer to Germany so as to be released gradually from this dependence; or whether they hoped at the critical juncture to be able to guide the weaker allies according to their will, are questions too hard for us to be able to answer as yet.

This much is certain, that in this extremely hazardous situation Germany had every reason to prevent a sudden conflict and it would have been absolutely incredible folly to conjure up a war deliberately. The Imperial Chancellor hoped that the final signature and the publication of the treaties on Africa and the Bagdad railway would form the starting-point for a permanent collaboration with England. It was to be hoped that the bitter resentment in France provoked by the three years' military service would lead in time to its abolition and thereafter perhaps to a reduction of armaments. In Russia internal movements of incalculable significance might easily break out at any moment, for the whole of Czardom was already undermined, and cripple its power of action for a long time to come. The Emperor Francis Joseph might die any day, and no one knew what would then happen in Austria-Hungary and whether a complete change of circumstances in the south-east might not afford us a very different opportunity. Our situation could scarcely become more dangerous and oppressive than it was, but it might improve. Hence German policy could do nothing but adapt itself to circumstances and wait. Germany had not always acted prudently. The sending of General von Liman to Constantinople held out little prospect of any tangible gain, for Turkey was so enfeebled that no great hopes could be built on her. But it infuriated the Russians and gave them the false impression that we were anxious to guard the Straits against her, which was never one of the aims of German policy. Germany's endeavour had rather been, wherever possible, to smooth out difficulties and to make for peace. In the spring of 1914, when the Greeks were clamorous for war, and the Kaiser was begged to use his influence with them for peace, he wrote in reply, "So I have! That is my special task, wherever I come in." [1] The Imperial Chancellor and all our diplomatists supported him in these efforts, and if in the summer of 1914 there were signs of uneasiness, it arose solely from the fear that some unforeseen event might render their efforts void and disturb the peace.

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[1] Comment on Waldhausen's despatch of March 30th, 1914.

## XVIII. THE OUTBREAK OF THE WORLD WAR[1]

On June 28th, 1914, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand was assassinated at Sarajevo.

A few weeks previously the Kaiser had met him at Konopischt and discussed thoroughly with him the situation in the Near East and the difficult problem of how to bring Bulgaria into the Triple Alliance without utterly losing Roumania. On the Austrian side these questions were dealt with in detail in a memorandum which clearly reveals the leading points of view of the Hofburg on the eve of the catastrophe. It is therein stated that Russia wanted to restore the Balkan League and direct it against Austria, to increase Serbia at the expense of Austria, and, in return, to compel Serbia to cede Macedonian territory to Bulgaria. Russia was alarming Turkey by representing Germany as aiming at a partition of Asia Minor, and Roumania was beguiled by hopes of the liberation of her compatriots living in Hungary. Austria could no longer remain idly watching these attempts. She had to find out what to expect from Roumania, but she did not believe that the League would ever again acquire its former stability. Roumania's dubious attitude affected the military position unfavourably for the Triple Alliance at the outbreak of the war. In any case it would be useful if Bulgaria were won over, just to show the Roumanians that they were not indispensable; then an alliance between Bulgaria and Turkey ought to be attempted. Germany might support this policy, and would then find out that these hostile machinations were aimed not only against Austria but also by no means indirectly against the German Empire. For Russia's hostility to the Danube State, which had no world policy, was at bottom due to the wish to frustrate Germany's opposition to her own goal—the control of the Straits.

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[1] The following narrative rests on the generally accessible material, so far as then published, collected and elucidated with great thoroughness by Sauerbeck in his *Kriegsausbruch* (1919). The particular documents quoted can easily be found by means of the excellent chronological collection of B. W. von Bülow, *Die Ersten Studen-schläge des Weltkrieges* (1922). Hitherto only the German and Austrian documents have been published in complete form (*Die Deutschen Dokumente zum Kriegsausbruch* by Count M. Montgelas and W. Schücking, 4 vols., 1919, and *Diplomatische Aktenstücke zur Vorgeschichte des Krieges 1914*, a supplement to the Austrian Red Book, 3 vols., 1919). The official publications of the other countries have great gaps and mutilations. With the Russian documents may now be compared *Die Fälschungen des Russischen Orangebuches*; *der wahre Telegrammwechsel Paris-Petersburg beim Kriegsausbruch*, by Freiherr G. von Romberg, 1922. Cf. also Montgelas, *Leitfaden zur Kriegsschuldfrage*, 1923; and M. Morhardt, *Les preuves. Le crime de droit commun. Le crime diplomatique.*

These arguments on the whole followed familiar lines. The most remarkable feature was the attempt to represent Germany as the real opponent of Russia, and Austria as exposed to hardships solely through being our ally, when the reverse was the truth. The idea of a preventive war was never even hinted at; the guiding idea was rather to improve the position of the Triple Alliance in the event of a war manœuvred by Russia.

Before this memorandum was sent off the outrage at Sarajevo had taken place. We know now that the assassins came from Belgrade and were in touch with the Serbian agitators, that their weapons came from the Government arsenal and were procured for them by Serbian officials, who also supplied them with money and passports to enable them to reach Sarajevo. It is practically certain that Colonel Dimitrievitch of the Serbian General Staff, head of the Intelligence Department, the instigator of the murder of the King in 1903, knew of the intention of the assassins and had them instructed in the use of the weapons.[1] The authorities in Vienna were not aware of these facts at the time, but judging by their knowledge of the conditions, the leaders of Austrian policy were immediately convinced that the propaganda for a greater Serbia and the support it received from the Serbian Government were responsible for the crime. A few sentences were added to the memorandum to the effect that Serbia's irreconcilable spirit had now been demonstrated afresh. "It is all the more urgently necessary for the Monarchy to tear down resolutely the threads which her enemies are weaving into a net about her head." In a special letter accompanying the memorandum, the Emperor Francis Joseph again expressed his regret at the attitude of Roumania. It was clearly evident that the friends of Serbia could not also be friends of Austria. The letter further observed, " My Government must direct its energies to isolate and reduce Serbia." The formation of a new Balkan League between Bulgaria, Turkey, Roumania and Greece, under the patronage of the Triple Alliance as a barrier against the Slav stream was only possible if Serbia were eliminated " as a political factor in the Balkans." Count Hoyos, the bearer of the letter, stated frankly that the partitioning of Serbia was necessary. Count Berchtold had already expressed the same sentiments to our Ambassador, who heard it said in other quarters too that Serbia must be dealt with once for all. Tschirschky urgently deprecated any rash measures.

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[1] Cf. Morhardt, *Les preuves* (German edition, p. 127).

From all these communications it is perfectly clear that Vienna was pursuing far-reaching plans and would not hesitate even at a reconstruction of the territorial status of the Balkan Peninsula. It was afterwards said that Count Hoyos had only voiced his own private opinions ; the Emperor's letter however, explicitly mentioned reducing the size of Serbia.

The Kaiser was greatly excited by the murder at Sarajevo. He quite understood Austria's wish for a prompt and drastic reckoning with Serbia, and thought that once they had made up their minds there should be no delay. Russia would probably adopt a hostile attitude, but she was not ready for war and would certainly hesitate before she appealed to arms. The Imperial Chancellor agreed with the Kaiser that Austria must be allowed a free hand ; he approved, though not without misgivings, the proposed negotiations with Bulgaria and promised to work for an understanding at Bucharest. We could take no part in the Serbian question, as that was not within our competence ; but we would stand by Austria's side in conformity with our treaty obligations. Rapid military proceedings were not expected from Austria.[1] On the Imperial Chancellor's advice, the Kaiser decided not to cancel his North Sea cruise but to carry it out as planned, in spite of possible events, so as not to increase public anxiety. Before leaving he personally informed some of the higher military commanders about the situation ; preparations for war were nevertheless not begun. The alleged "Crown Council" at Potsdam never took place.

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[1] Cf. the letter from the Minister of War to Moltke on July 5th in Montgelas, *Leitfaden zur Kriegsschuldfrage*, p. 196.

On July 7th it was arranged in Vienna what steps were to be taken. Count Berchtold was in favour of an immediate advance into Serbia, even though it should lead to war with Russia. On the advice of the Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Tisza, the Ministerial Council decided first of all to issue an ultimatum, which was, however, against Tisza's wish, to contain intolerable conditions, as a diplomatic success was not sufficient. It was, therefore, merely intended to prepare the way for military action and to justify it. The Emperor Francis Joseph consented to this plan. The delivery of the ultimatum was, however, postponed until President Poincaré, who was then in Russia, had left St. Petersburg. They wanted thereby to avoid arrangements being made between Russia and France, in the event of complications with Serbia. They naturally could not prevent the two heads of these allied States discussing this question in their interviews ; for that Austria would take action of some sort against Serbia, all the world knew and expected. They agreed, as a matter of fact, to oppose firmly any attempt to infringe Serbia's independence, Poincaré having evidently attempted to demonstrate to the Czar that an Austro-Serbian conflict would inevitably lead on to the struggle between the Entente and the Central Powers, which this time must be accepted. He promised France's unconditional support, although the Republic was only bound by treaty to fight if Russia herself were attacked.[1]

In Berlin Austria's hesitation was thought deplorable. They were unwilling to take part in the drafting of the demands to Serbia, but they were really anxious when nothing further transpired as to the ultimate goal of the intended action. On July 17th Jagow decided to inquire in Vienna as to the Austrian Government's ideas for the future territorial status of Serbia. "It would be well for us to have some idea as to where the path is leading." With justifiable anxiety over the attitude that Italy might assume an effort was made to induce the

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[1] On this point the Memoirs of Maurice Paléologue (*La Russie des Tsars*, 3 vols., 1922) are extremely instructive.

Austrian statesmen to get into touch in good time with the third ally, and even to urge upon them the renunciation of the Trentino. In a very questionable interpretation of the treaty of alliance, Count Berchtold haughtily declined any negotiation with Italy: as Austria herself was not seeking any increase of territory in the Balkans, Italy had no claim to compensations.

On July 19th the final decisive Ministerial Council took place at Vienna. Count Tisza withdrew his opposition to the sending of a short-term ultimatum with intolerable conditions, but still held firmly to the view that no plans of conquest should be pursued, and at most only a rectification of the frontier aimed at. The Magyars, said he, had no wish to incorporate any further Serbian elements in the Monarchy. Count Berchtold insisted that Serbia in any case must be made smaller; Bulgaria should be given as large a share as possible, but Greece, Albania, and perhaps Roumania should also receive portions. Under certain circumstances it might be desirable for Austria herself to receive a portion of Serbian territory. The majority agreed with him. Count Stürgkh brought up the question of expelling the Karageorgevitch dynasty and of concluding a military convention which would place Serbia in a position of political dependence on Austria. A temporary occupation of those territories which would afterwards be left to Serbia was definitely contemplated. Not a word was to be said outside as to these views, but merely a statement that Austria was not waging a war of conquest. Even Germany was given no accurate information about the resolution which had been taken.

It was only on July 22nd, 24 hours before the ultimatum was handed in at Belgrade, that Germany was informed of the text. In Berlin they were shocked by the whole tone of the document, as well as by several of the demands, but there was no longer any possibility of effecting alterations, as the document was already in the hands of the Austrian Ambassador in Belgrade, who was to deliver it on the following day.

Germany's attitude in the weeks before the ultimatum shows that it was regarded as a self-evident duty to support Austria in her proceedings against Serbia, quite irrespective of what she might demand in Belgrade. It was perfectly well known that every attempt to use force or permanently injure Serbia's independence would call forth Russia's embittered opposition, and that if it came to war between Austria and Russia, Germany and France in any case, and England probably, would be drawn in. It was believed that Russia was not ready for war; furthermore that the Czar, as representative of the Dynastic principle, would refuse to countenance the instigators of the murder of a Prince; and finally, much was hoped from England's restraining influence in St. Petersburg, which had proved efficacious in previous Balkan crises. But whatever weight be attached to these considerations, there can be no doubt that the danger of a world war arose when Serbia was treated in a way that compelled Russia to intervene to defend her own prestige, and that was calculated to make Austria appear the aggressor in the eyes of the other Powers, England in particular.

So Austria was to be supported, whatever the risk. The motive for this lay not only in the feeling of loyalty to treaty obligations and to the solidarity of all monarchies, although both points of view appealed strongly to the Kaiser, but above all in the consideration that Austria regarded the destruction of the danger of a greater Serbia as a matter of life and death for her, and would never forgive us if we left her in the lurch now, and compelled her to yield, or even to show what, in her opinion, was ruinous toleration. It was the danger of losing our last ally, which had lain like a burden on our statesmen since the formation of the Entente and which had entailed a far-reaching change in our relations with Austria. Added to this was the feeling that the great reckoning towards which Russia's policy was manifestly directed and which France also desired, was unavoidable, and that it was extremely doubtful if Austria would stand by us when danger threatened, if the struggle broke out over some question in which Austria's interests were not directly affected. It was hoped that Austria would act promptly and vigorously, so that it would be a case of a *fait accompli* before the other Powers were able to intervene. Information had been given as to the leading points in the ultimatum, but not as to the form and the details, on which a great deal depended, nor as to the plans for conquest and dismemberment entertained at Vienna. There was no idea of a deliberate preventive war. The prevailing mood in Berlin was rather a species of surrender to a fate from which people despaired of escaping. If the struggle was inevitable, it was better to let it come, if the enemy wanted to begin it now, before his own preparations were completed.

Seeing that our policy promised unconditional help to our Ally, would it not have been a right and natural thing in a situation which might lead to a world war, at least to require that every step taken should previously be agreed upon with Germany? If we were to share the consequences, to risk our industrial prosperity and thousands of lives for the sake of maintaining Austria's protectorate in the western part of the Balkan Peninsula, we were at least entitled to demand that no step should be taken without our consent. Only then could we effectively insist that nothing should be done that made Austria appear the aggressor. As it was, we had to shoulder the full responsibility for Austria's policy, although ignorant of its ultimate aims, because we had begun by promising our sanction to whatever Vienna might do.

At the same time there was a special reason in Berlin for not insisting more strongly on information as to the details of the action planned and as to the text of the ultimatum. It was thought we could then say to the other Powers: It is a matter exclusively between Austria and Serbia, and Germany has no part in it. Thereby we might be able to keep Russia too from intervening and to "localise" the struggle. Whether such a standpoint would be tenable, or this assertion would find credence with others, must have seemed highly doubtful from the outset.

The Austrian ultimatum demanded, firstly, the immediate publication in the Serbian official journal of a declaration stating in prescribed terms that the Government condemned all attempts aiming at the disintegration of the territories of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and would proceed with the utmost rigour against anyone who was guilty of such attempts. Furthermore, the suppression of all publications hostile to Austria, the disbanding of the society "Narodna Odbrana," the elimination of all propaganda against Austria in schools and school books, as well as the dismissal of certain officers and civilian officials indicated by Austria. Further, it demanded permission for Austrian agents to take part in fighting propaganda, for the inauguration of a judicial search on Serbian soil for the members of the conspiracy of June 28th, in collaboration with Austrian special delegates and subject to specified measures for investigating the crime; and lastly, it demanded information about hostile remarks made by highly placed Serbian officials. Of these demands, the co-operation of Austrian agencies in the suppression of certain movements on Serbian territory was an undoubted attack on Serbia's sovereignty. Apart from this, the categorical tone of the Note, and the brief period of 48 hours allowed for a reply, emphasised the harshness of the whole proceeding. We know that this was not accidental, but that in Vienna they had purposely drafted the ultimatum in such a way that Serbia could not accept it, because they had from the beginning decided to resort to military measures.

Although the Note was read in Berlin with considerable misgiving, yet they decided to support Austria unconditionally and to endeavour to keep the conflict local. This point of view might be judicially free from reproach, politically it rested on an utter misunderstanding of the facts. Russia was determined not to allow Serbia to be humiliated in any circumstances. Inaction in this case would have destroyed the confidence of the Balkan Slavs in the Czar's help, which the proceedings of late years had considerably shaken, and might have induced Serbia to purchase a better understanding with the Danube State by proving compliant. Russia was much better equipped for war than in previous years, and she was sure of France's help. Even though the Czar personally was averse from war, a powerful party in the Court, ardently supported by the Pan-Slav press, was determined to use the first opportunity to break with Austria and Germany. Sazonoff was strongly under its influence. It was thus at least very doubtful if Russia would consent to keep the war "local," which would have prevented her giving effective help to Serbia if the latter were attacked. While it is quite understandable that Berlin should try this means at first, it is perfectly incomprehensible that they should have obstinately clung to this idea when it was seen that Russia was not prepared to let herself be thrust out of the negotiations in this way. Thus were the precious hours allowed to speed past unused.

Of the other Powers, England agitated for extending the time for the reply and for the intervention between Austria and Russia of the four Great Powers not immediately concerned. Thus she at once assumed that Russia was an interested party. France wished all infringement of Serbia's sovereignty to be avoided, and exhorted Germany to use her influence to induce a more tolerant spirit in Austria. In St. Petersburg it was felt that Austria was merely seeking a pretext for war with Serbia, in which case Russia could not remain indifferent. It was decided to begin to mobilise as soon as Austria attacked Serbia. In order to have the needful security for their own decisions, an effort was made to get a definite declaration from London that England would stand by Russia if a great war broke out. But this Grey refused to give.

Germany transmitted to Vienna England's desire for an extension of the truce, but declared that in her opinion intervention by non-interested Powers between Austria and Serbia was out of the question, because that would be bringing the Austro-Serbian quarrel before the tribunal of Europe, so to speak. It would be quite different if Russia became a party; such intervention would then be possible. Austria declined the request to prolong the truce, but, on Germany's advice, assured St. Petersburg that she was not aiming at any extension of territory at Serbia's expense, and that even after the interruption of diplomatic relations no military measures would be taken against Serbia, provided she decided to accept the conditions laid down.

Serbia herself appealed to Russia and the Powers for help. She was prepared to make concessions, but could not submit to dictation in matters of policy nor to renounce certain ideals. Meanwhile she was willing to accept all that the Czar advised.

Everyone waited in suspense on the evening of July 25th for the Serbian answer. A few moments before the expiry of the truce, the Premier, Pashitch, appeared at the Austrian Legation and handed over a Note in which he denied that any disloyal action had been taken by his Government. For remarks made by private individuals they were not responsible. They were ready to proceed against all persons who were proved to be implicated in the crime of Sarajevo and would have expected to be invited to co-operate in the investigations. The declaration required they would publish in the Government journal with a few slight changes. They were further willing to propose to the Skuptshina an alteration in the constitution and the press laws, so that utterances such as those to which Austria objected might be punished or suppressed. They were willing to disband the "Narodna Odbrana," abolish propaganda in the schools, if proven, and dismiss the guilty officials and officers, as soon as it had been established by a judicial examination that the transactions of which they were accused had taken place. With reference to the co-operation of Austrian agents, a more explicit definition was requested as to what was thereby intended, and they expressed their willingness to admit co-operation as far as compatible with the principles of international law. Permission for special delegates to take part in the search for the persons suspected of participation in the crime could not be allowed, as that would be an infringement of the constitution. Nevertheless, in special cases information could be furnished as to the results of the search. The remaining minor requests were granted. In conclusion Serbia declared her willingness, in the event of Austria not considering this reply adequate, to accept the decision of the International Tribunal of Justice at the Hague or of the Powers.

This answer was very skilfully drafted, for although in reality it conceded little, in form it was conciliatory. Quite a number of the demands had apparently been accepted, others had been left open for further negotiation, in many instances qualifying conditions had been added which later on would have facilitated evasion, and only in one solitary case—the co-operation of delegates in the search—had a direct refusal been returned. Immediately after the Austrian Minister had read through the Note he declared it inadequate, in accordance with his instructions, and broke off diplomatic negotiations. Thirty minutes later he left Belgrade and the staff of the Legation accompanied him. His orders were that unless there was an unconditional surrender (which was not expected) he was to leave at once.

That afternoon the Serbian Government had already given orders to mobilise; by the evening Austria had ordered the mobilisation of the eight southern army corps. On July 26th, when tidings came in of these proceedings, Grey renewed his proposal for the intervention of the four Powers provided that Austria temporarily suspended military operations. He considered the best thing was to call a conference of Ambassadors in London, and he begged the German Government to persuade Austria to accept the Serbian reply, at least as the basis of further deliberation. The King of England assured the Kaiser's brother, then in London, that he would do everything to prevent England being drawn into the war.

Again Germany insisted that in her opinion intervention was only possible between Austria and Russia, not between Austria and Serbia. A conference of Ambassadors was not thought the right way for intervention. Meanwhile the English proposal was forwarded to Vienna without support in any way being given to it. France accepted the English proposal and Russia also, should direct negotiations not prove successful. But if need be, Russia assured Serbia of her help. In the event of a general conflict the English Government reserved to itself absolute freedom of action towards both parties. At France's suggestion it requested Germany to formulate adequate terms for a proposal of intervention.

As already mentioned, Russia wished to make an attempt to negotiate direct with Austria, and on July 26th suggested toning down certain points in the ultimatum. She took for granted that Austria would not attack Serbia, otherwise no assurance from Austria could be of any avail.

Nevertheless, Austria still believed that by promising not to demand any territorial concessions she would be able to prevent Russia intervening. She was determined to resort to military measures, and persistently held that Serbia's concessions were only for show.

Meanwhile a new proposal for intervention was brought up by Italy. Austria was to give the four Powers more accurate information on those points of the ultimatum which Serbia was not prepared to accept in their present form, thereby guaranteeing that no infringement of Serbia's sovereignty was intended. On receipt of these elucidations the Powers would advise Serbia to accept the ultimatum unconditionally. Austria's demands would thus be officially fulfilled and Serbia's position made easier, because she would now be complying with the joint wishes of the Powers and would have their guarantee that her sovereignty would not be impaired. Strange to say this proposal did not meet with serious consideration from any side.[1]

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[1] *Vide* Morhardt for exhaustive treatment of this overture, *op. cit.*, p. 262. His contention is that Grey purposely communicated this proposal only to

News now came in of further military measures. On July 26th the German Consuls at Odessa and Kieff sent word that mobilisation had begun in Southern Russia. The Russian Minister of War when questioned by the Military Attaché denied that any steps towards mobilisation had been taken, as the troops would not be mobilised until Austria actually attacked Serbia, and then not against Germany but only against Austria. There is no doubt that this statement was merely intended to mislead the German representative. Certainly no direct order for mobilisation had been issued, but on July 25th the pre-mobilisation period was proclaimed ; under cover of this apparently innocent device far-reaching war measures had already been inaugurated. It is often asserted that even before July 26th Russia had already begun military preparations which were really part of the mobilisation ; but hitherto there has been no incontrovertible proof of this assertion.

On July 27th France suddenly stopped her manœuvres, and England, whose naval manœuvres had just ended, decided not to demobilise her fleet but to keep it at war strength.

On July 28th, at 11 a.m., Austria-Hungary sent her declaration of war by telegram to Serbia, which further strained the situation. At the same time Austria declined, on the ground of Serbia's answer, to negotiate with the four Powers or with Russia. She would only enter into direct negotiations with Russia if that Power pledged herself not to hinder her military proceedings against Serbia.

Until July 27th public opinion abroad had not been unfavourable to Austria. Both Grey and the English press had recognised that Austria must receive satisfaction and Serbia be taught a lesson. Nor had Paris ventured to dispute that. Even the harsh ultimatum had not been taken too tragically, because it was regarded as a first demand, intended to lead to

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Russia and not to Germany until it was too late, from which he infers that Grey wanted the war and wished to negative this chance of preventing it. But there is no proof of this in the materials so far available. Furthermore, it must be remembered that the Kaiser—who completely misjudged its significance—gave this proposal a very hostile reception, and Austria declared with almost incredible obtuseness that she could no longer accept the conditions laid down in the Note, now that war had broken out, but must impose new conditions. (The Ambassador at Vienna to the Foreign Office, Berlin, July 30th, *Deutsche Dokumente*, vol. ii. No. 432.)

negotiations which might end in an understanding. On July 27th the full text of the Serbian answer was known, and immediately a revulsion of feeling set in. It was thought incomprehensible that Austria should have broken off negotiations and mobilised after such a compliant declaration from Serbia. The feeling was shared by the leading circles in Berlin, where the Serbian reply arrived in the afternoon. On the following morning it was laid before the Kaiser, who had just returned from his northern cruise. He was astonished at Serbia's moderation and commented:

> "A brilliant result for a truce of only 48 hours! This is more than one could expect. A great moral victory for Vienna, but it thereby removes any cause for war and Giesl might have remained quietly at Belgrade. I should never have ordered mobilisation after that."

The impression produced by the Serbian answer and the similarity of the verdicts from the press of the different countries caused serious misgivings in Berlin. It was feared that now Austria would appear as the attacking party without a cause, and that if a general war broke out the odium would fall on Austria and her allies. There was a strong feeling that this must be avoided, both for the sake of public opinion throughout the country and out of consideration for other States and peoples. Also, during these last days it was quite evident that the allies, Italy and Roumania, were little disposed to recognise the terms of the alliance as operative, because Austria had obstinately, both before and after the event, refused every offer of compensation to Italy.

There was another and an ominous circumstance. General Conrad sent word that he thought it unwise to attack with insufficient forces and that the general advance would probably not begin till August 12th. That put an end to the possibility of making Serbia's military overthrow a *fait accompli* before the other Powers could join in. It is amazing that Austria, who aimed at this overthrow from the very start, should not only have broken off the negotiations and mobilised, but formally declared war without being ready to attack. Hence arose a highly unfavourable situation allowing the enemy fourteen days during which he could resort to diplomatic pressure or complete his armaments. The drastic reversal of the general position brought about by the events and tidings since July 27th resulted in a corresponding alteration in German policy. Although the Kaiser would willingly have allowed Austria the military satisfaction of occupying Belgrade once the mobilisation had actually taken place, he could not fail to realise that, for the time being, a restraining influence in Vienna was urgently necessary. The Imperial Chancellor was of opinion that Austria must now demonstrate convincingly to the whole world that she was compelled to draw her sword solely to defend her own vital interests, not to attack others nor to make conquests. So it was decided to urge Austria more energetically than before to show herself more accommodating.

On July 28th Bethmann again sent advice to Vienna urging Austria to declare that she was not seeking extensions of territory, and would only occupy Serbian territory temporarily till the fulfilment of her claims had been secured. If that did not satisfy Russia, public opinion would turn again to Austria. Herr von Tschirschky had the hard task of presenting this overture so as to avoid the impression that we wished to hold Austria back. There was no word in this advice of showing an accommodating spirit in the matter itself, and thus the whole step wore an air of feebleness and vacillation.

On July 29th, at Russia's wish, England renewed her offer of intervention. Hostilities must be stopped for the time being. Austria might at most occupy perhaps Belgrade and a few other places ; but she must then call a halt and make known her terms. Grey added that England could only stand aside so long as the conflict was limited to Austria and Russia. If Germany and France were drawn in she could no longer do so, and the English Government in certain contingencies would be forced to rapid decisions. To the Italian Ambassador he added that if the intervention were accepted, Austria could be granted every reasonable satisfaction without going to war, as the Serbians in any case would be compelled, out of consideration for Russia and with her consent, to submit to Austria's wishes.

As a matter of fact, this offer was the last possible chance of maintaining peace. The Kaiser was indignant at England's attitude, because, without any valid reason, he had assumed that England would in any case restrain Russia and France from interfering. The Imperial Chancellor was greatly disturbed by this communication ; he now attempted to get England to give an assurance of unconditional neutrality by promising that the European territorial status of France, Belgium, and Holland would in all circumstances remain unimpaired. This proposal was declined by Grey on the following day with the statement that it would be a disgrace to England to make any such bargain with Germany at the expense of France. On the other hand he was ready, if Germany co-operated now in maintaining the peace, to work afterwards to bring about a general understanding which would secure Germany and her allies from an aggressive or hostile policy on the part of the Entente Powers.

Meanwhile, owing to the remonstrances from Berlin, Austria had declared herself willing to enter into a direct interchange of opinions with Russia and eventually to accept the intervention of the four Powers, with the stipulation that the progress of her military operations (not even begun) was not to be disturbed, and that the Russian mobilisation was to be suspended. These conditions were scarcely calculated to ease the path to negotiations. How far Austria was prepared to yield it is impossible to say. Any concession to Russia would make impossible the original aim of having a final reckoning now with Serbia, and so would overthrow the whole programme of the Vienna Government. Perhaps they might eventually, under German pressure, have agreed to this in order to avoid the world war ; but just then there was little inclination for that. By the declaration of war they had rendered the situation even more acute, evidently with the intention of making efforts at intervention increasingly difficult. There were other indications that feeling at Vienna was far from conciliatory. The members of the Austrian Embassy in London discussed quite openly the plan for partitioning Serbia, while the official policy of Vienna was proclaiming Austria's disinterestedness. Bethmann was justified in characterising this conduct as " double-dealing."

The danger of a world war, and of England's participation on the side of the enemy, was now so imminent that the Imperial Chancellor decided, putting aside his earlier fears, to exercise the utmost pressure at Vienna. Austria was to be induced to offer Italy compensations and to accept the intervention of the four Powers or else negotiate direct with St. Petersburg.

> "We are quite ready to fulfil our duty as allies but we must decline to allow ourselves to be drawn lightly into a world conflagration by Vienna, without consideration for our advice. Please express yourself to Count Berchtold with the utmost vigour and earnestness."

This admonition was sent off on the night of July 29th-30th. But it arrived too late. Had such language been used in Vienna at the outset more might have been achieved. Even now the decisive word was not spoken, viz. that the terms of the alliance were not considered operative if Austria, by rejecting intervention, appeared to be the aggressor.

Count Berchtold now decided, although slowly and reluctantly, to consent to a direct discussion of the Serbian Note between his Government and the Russian Government. But the Austrian representative was to confine himself to elucidations and not to allow any changes. The Minister declared that the whole exchange of Notes had been negatived by the declaration of war and that entirely new conditions would be required for the conclusion of peace.

Direct intercourse had thus been started between Vienna and St. Petersburg. On July 31st the Austrian Ministerial Council accepted the English proposal for intervention advocated by Germany, with the reservation that Russia must suspend her preparations for war and refrain from hindering Austria's proceedings against Serbia. As, however, it was at the same time decided to omit nothing from the demands of July 23rd in the impending negotiations, it is doubtful if any positive result would have been reached. The attempt was never made, for all further discussion of the various forms of intervention, which need not be gone into here in further detail, was broken off by the Czar's decision to mobilise his whole army.

It is clear as the day that this was the decisive step that first made war inevitable. In the Franco-Russian military convention one of the fundamental conditions was that war automatically followed mobilisation. A Russian secret army order issued in 1912, which was known in Berlin, expressly stated that the order to mobilise was to be regarded as equivalent to the order to begin hostilities. This order had, indeed, been cancelled; but even without an express order of this kind, it was inherent in the nature of things that complete mobilisation must inevitably entail war, as it forced counter measures to be taken, and modern armies, owing to their great size, cannot remain armed and idle on the frontiers for long without coming to blows and dislocating the carefully thought-out plans of action.

The enormous significance of this event naturally leads us to ask how it came about. Although the answer cannot be given yet with absolute certainty, the most important dates are firmly established.[1] After the 'preliminary mobilisation' had been ordered on July 25th, on the following days the plan was under consideration for partial mobilisation in the southern districts of Kieff, Odessa, Moscow, and Kazan against Austria-Hungary, at first only in the event of her attacking Serbia. Again assurances were given that no measures were thought of against Germany. But while the Czar and Sazonoff were contemplating this plan seriously, the General Staff was opposed to it from the outset, urging that the execution of this plan would add greatly to the difficulty of a later complete mobilisation, as no scheme had been worked out for the transfer from partial mobilisation to that of the whole army. As it was not thought possible to avoid a general war, and there was probably no desire to do so, immediate mobilisation of the whole army was urgently demanded. In spite of all, the Czar and Sazonoff adhered for several days to their original intention. According to the opinion of the German representatives, Sazonoff, after some violent outbursts, seemed to think a peaceful solution possible. After July 26th they thought they noticed a change in his behaviour; but the news of the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia (July 28th) seemed completely to alter him. He, too, now advocated complete mobilisation, which would almost inevitably entail war, whereas the partial mobilisation originally planned, which did not threaten Germany, would not have provoked any counter measures from Germany and would have allowed the Berlin Government to continue to act as intermediary. At the urgent request of Sazonoff and the General Staff, the Czar reluctantly signed the order for general mobilisation on the night of July 28th-29th, which on the completion of the necessary formalities was to be sent to the various divisions of the troops on the evening of the 29th.

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[1] *Vide* especially Dobrorolski's *Die Mobilmachung der Russischen Armee, 1914*. Cp. also *Der Beginn des Krieges 1914. Tages-Aufzeichnungen des ehemahligen Russischen Aussenministeriums*, translated with an introduction by A. von Wegerer from the *Krasny-Archiv*, part iv.

There was yet another change. Immediately on his return, the Kaiser sent a telegram to the Czar appealing to him on the ground of the solidarity of monarchical interests against regicides, and stating at the same time that he would strain every nerve to bring Austria to a friendly understanding with Russia. The declaration already given by Austria, that she was not striving for conquests at Serbia's expense, offered a suitable basis. But if Russia armed and Austria threatened, his mediation would become impossible. The Kaiser's appeal was not without its effect on the Czar and caused him not to send off the order already signed, but only the order for a partial mobilisation. Open disobedience was not attempted. The telegram which was to have been despatched at 9 p.m. was held back at the last minute, and a few hours later the order for only partial mobilisation was sent off.

On the following forenoon, July 30th, Sazonoff hastened to the Czar and, pointing out that France would otherwise be misled as to the value of the alliance, obtained from him the consent to the general mobilisation. Towards noon he telephoned this to General Janushkevitch, Chief of the General Staff, and suggested at the same time that after sending off the order, he should leave his office so as to prevent a possible counter-order from the Czar reaching him. At 6 p.m. the order for general mobilisation was sent off by telegram ; early on the 31st it was placarded in St. Petersburg.

The course of these events shows plainly that the General Staff, undoubtedly in collusion with the Grand Ducal clique, was working from the beginning for complete mobilisation, *i.e.* for war, and that it gradually won over first Sazonoff and finally even the peace-loving Czar. Neither the Austrian nor the German measures for mobilisation were responsible for their decisions. Austria had only mobilised eight corps against Serbia and none against Russia ; Germany so far had made no military preparations. The notorious supplement to the *Lokalanzeiger*, which gave a false report of the German mobilisation, immediately contradicted, only appeared at 1 p.m. on July 30th, the very hour, according to General Dobrorolski, that Sazonoff telephoned to the

General Staff that the Czar had just given his consent to the mobilisation of the whole army.

The position taken up by Sazonoff was obviously decisive. Had he adhered to his original attitude, the Czar would have remained steadfast in opposition to the General Staff. The effect on public opinion in Russia of the Austrian declaration of war against Serbia turned the scale for Sazonoff ; he dreaded being accused of weakness and of having sacrificed a kindred Slav State if he did not take immediate and energetic measures. Our Ambassador thought his altered attitude might possibly be due to the fact that on July 26th he had obtained the assurance, hitherto lacking, of England's help. So far, however, there is no proof of any definite pledge having been given by England.

Grey has often been reproached in Germany for not having used his great influence in St. Petersburg to prevent the mobilisation and to induce Russia to yield, from which it has been inferred that Grey at heart really wanted the war ; because if he had wished he could have prevented it, but he had not done so. I cannot read Sir Edward Grey's heart and do not know what his latest and secret thoughts were. But I, too, share the feeling that he could have done more than he did, so far as we can judge hitherto. I think it may be accepted that he never was in favour of peace at any price ; to a decisive humiliation of Russia, which would also have been a defeat for the Entente, he would never have consented. His love of peace was limited by England's interests, nor did he wish to see the balance of power between the Entente and the Triple Alliance disturbed in favour of the latter. It is doubtful, however, if he learned of Russia's intention to proceed with complete mobilisation, before exhausting all the possibilities of mediation, in sufficient time to allow him to take serious steps to dissuade her. It is also doubtful whether such steps would have had any effect, and whether Grey, as a consequence of his previous policy, would not have been forced to fight as soon as Russia seriously wanted it. If he were to uphold his system, Grey had to avoid causing the impression in Russia, as had already happened repeatedly, that England left her allies in the lurch at the critical moment, especially now when the Russians considered that their vital interests were at stake ; for that would have seriously shaken the Entente. If Russia, in spite of England's dissuasion, seized her sword, what else could England do but stand by her side, unless the Entente were to be completely wrecked?

Grey, after all, was not England, and it was doubtful to the last whether he could win over Parliament and public opinion in his own country for war. Herein lay the real difficulty of the situation for him and for Russia, and we are about to see how it was overcome.

We do not know definitely whether Russia received a direct promise of help from Grey during the critical days or whether in St. Petersburg they were merely trusting to the pressure of circumstances to compel England ultimately to join them; perhaps, too, they were encouraged by the over-sanguine communications of their Paris friends. In any case, it looks as if the decision to mobilise—apart from the fear of the Austrians suddenly overpowering Serbia—were due to some other circumstance. Through her obstinacy Austria, as we know, had caused a revulsion of public opinion unfavourable to her. It was indispensable to take advantage of this lucky chance, as they well knew in Russia that Grey would only be able to convince Parliament of the necessity for war if it was the general opinion that Austria was the aggressor and that Russia was acting in self-defence. If Austria began to relent under German pressure, as was likely, it would easily be possible for the mood to change, and Russia, if she would not consent to more temperate demands for Serbia, would then appear as the obstructor rejecting the possibilities of peace. No one knew how far Austria was prepared to go. The war party saw themselves faced with the probability of being obliged to counsel Serbia to far-reaching concessions, and of the crisis ending in a very considerable strengthening of Austria's prestige in the Balkans.

Hence Austria's unexpected change of course seems to have urged on the war party at St. Petersburg to exert itself to the utmost to carry through the mobilisation of the whole army at once and so destroy the negotiations before they had begun. Fear of an eventual diplomatic reverse, for which he would be blamed, made Sazonoff compliant, but we can only speculate as to the arguments employed to influence the feeble and peace-loving Czar. It is said that he was alarmed lest prolonged hesitation might be interpreted by France as a breach of treaty obligations, lest the Paris Government itself in its doubts as to Russia's fidelity might wrest from Germany a promise of neutrality, and so leave Russia wholly isolated. He was also probably told that a diplomatic reverse would turn the nation against the dynasty and against his own person ; and that if a revolution broke out because the Sovereign himself had acted contrary to the national interests, no one could answer for the results. It is scarcely necessary to add that the French Ambassador supported the war party with all his might, as he himself frankly admitted.

After the announcement of the Russian mobilisation at 11 a.m. on July 30th, further steps proceeded with almost automatic precision. Austria and Germany were forced to reply with a general mobilisation. To the detriment of her own military chances Germany at first merely proclaimed a state of war and negotiated again with Russia for the repeal of her orders for mobilisation. A practical result could scarcely be expected. The Imperial Chancellor on July 31st sent a request to St. Petersburg for the cessation of all war measures against Germany and Austria, and as after the allotted period of twelve hours no adequate acceptance had resulted, the declaration of war against Russia was handed in (August 1st, 7 p.m.).

It was a very drastic step, which has been often sharply condemned. Instead of leaving the formal declaration of the state of war to Russia, as the actual attacking party, or at least waiting till the outbreak of war between Russia and Austria had rendered the terms of the treaty operative for us, Germany herself declared war on Russia, even before Austria did so.

What reasons decided Germany ? Ever since news came in of the general mobilisation in Russia, Berlin was convinced that war was unavoidable, and from this moment forward the military point of view became paramount. Real chances of victory, in a war on two fronts, lay in the greater rapidity and precision of the German advance. The German General Staff was justly convinced that after the announcement of the partial mobilisation against Austria on July 29th, or even as early as July 25th, Russia had secretly been mobilising her whole army, and that we were culpably diminishing our own chances if we left the enemy to increase his advantage. We might have looked on, though with a heavy heart, so long as there was any prospect of avoiding war. As soon as it was certain that a fight was bound to come, it would have been criminal folly to allow the Russians to complete their preparations undisturbed while we ourselves did nothing. Germany was compelled to mobilise. But as the plans for deploying involved the plan of operations for the first days of war, it was impossible to defer the advance to the frontiers to an indefinite date without throwing the entire plan for mobilisation, with its carefully calculated time-tables, into utter confusion. Even if this had been technically possible, a halt of this kind at the frontiers after the mobilisation had taken place, would again have allowed the Russians time to finish their much more tedious advance uninterrupted. Hence, once mobilisation was begun, it was no longer a question of seeing whether and when Russia would declare war on us ; it was imperative, by some means or other, to get a declaration of war without delay. At Berlin the only way they could see to obtain this was by sending a short-term ultimatum. Although there was no disguising the fact that this procedure gave the enemy the opportunity of exhibiting us as the attacking party, it was decided to subordinate this consideration to military necessity. With curious simplicity it was thought that ultimately every sensible person would see that the real aggressor need not be the one who issues the declaration of war. It is open to question whether there might not have been some other way of reaching this end, whether these military movements might not have been allowed to develop without the issue beforehand of a declaration of war.

A few days later Austria issued her declaration of war.

Relations with France became much more difficult after July 31st. Hitherto Paris had strictly adhered to the rôle of the impartial spectator solely concerned to maintain the peace ; the outside world, especially the English world, must not guess how urgently they desired war. It would have been imprudent to take any risks prematurely owing to the love of peace among large sections of the people comprising probably more than half the nation. It was confidently reckoned that owing to the military necessity for a rapid advance, Germany would be forced into the rôle of the formal aggressor. On July 30th the Ministerial Council resolved to withdraw the troops 10 kilometres from the German frontiers so as to prevent any overstepping of the frontier from the French side, thereby impressing on England France's anxiety for the maintenance of the peace. When Germany then actually declared war on Russia, this fact was immediately turned to account, and the greatest emphasis was attached to it as proof that we were the aggressors, whereas the French Government left their people in ignorance of the fact that it was Russia who had brought about this critical situation, by ordering a general mobilisation without due cause.

Our diplomacy was in a difficult position. Our plan of war, which had been worked out before by Count Schlieffen, rested on the fundamental idea that a war on two fronts could most easily be brought to a victorious conclusion by attacking immediately with superior forces whichever of the opponents could most easily be completely overthrown, while keeping the other opponent meanwhile engaged until the victory over the first allowed us to devote all our strength to the other. France was the opponent easiest to overthrow completely, for the wide spaces of Russia seemed to preclude either a decisive victory or a satisfactory occupation of the country. Hence the first and heaviest blows ought to fall on France.

But what was to happen if France chose to play the rôle of spectator till Germany with all her strength had fixed her teeth deep into the enemy on the East? What if she protested plaintively her peaceful intentions and delayed formally to recognize that the terms of the alliance were now operative? Even if it were only a matter of a couple of days, the whole German plan of operations would be utterly wrecked. On no condition could that be allowed, hence the General Staff insisted that a state of war must also be produced in the West. For naturally enough no one believed that France would for long remain neutral when Germany and Austria were fighting Russia.

In Berlin they thought that they had shown great tact in charging Herr von Schön, on July 31st, to inquire of the French Minister whether France meant to remain neutral if war broke out between Germany and Russia. If the answer ran that France would help Russia in accordance with the terms of her treaty, Germany would consider herself justified, once war broke out in the East, in regarding a state of war as then existing between her and France. But if anything were said about France remaining neutral, the Ambassador had secret instructions to demand the evacuation of the fortresses of Toul and Verdun until the end of the war in the East, as security for French neutrality. As his demand would naturally have been declined, we should then have had a reason, although a somewhat suspicious one, for a declaration of war.

But the French statesmen were much too shrewd to be caught in this way. At noon on August 1st Viviani, the French Minister, replied briefly, " France will do what her interests demand." The Ambassador sent this answer to Berlin, where they were sorely puzzled to know what to do next. Their first impulse was to tell the French that they could not be allowed to choose the time to threaten our western frontier, and under this pretext to declare war on them. But this idea was abandoned. The General Staff hoped to be spared a formal declaration of war, because, when our demands on Belgium were made known, France would probably be compelled, by the force of public opinion, to take military measures, or else advance to protect the neutrality of Belgium. But at the Foreign Office they were not prepared to break off diplomatic relations without such a formal declaration, and ultimately manœuvred for a declaration of war by alleging various breaches of neutrality on the frontiers, some of them very trivial, others not above suspicion. On the evening of August 3rd the declaration was delivered in Paris in a garbled form owing to the defective condition of the telegraph service.

Here again Germany had drawn upon herself the odium of being the aggressor. French tactics had proved triumphant; the French did not use the breaches on the frontier alleged by Germany to issue a declaration of war, but merely entered a formal protest, and so were able to present their long-suffering in contrast to Germany's proceedings as proof of their love of peace. That this was all carefully thought out is proved by Poincaré's answer to Iswolski when the latter announced Germany's declaration of war on Russia and requested France's help as her ally. The President replied that Russia need not press for an immediate declaration of war from France as Germany herself would probably declare war and thereby " considerably increase the enthusiasm of the French nation for the war."

The *mise en scène* of these two declarations of war was certainly not a masterpiece of German diplomacy. The underlying causes for its failure at this critical moment require further investigation. But it is well to remember that in view of the mobilisations to East and West—for France mobilised on August 1st—Germany was placed in such a position that she had no alternative but to clear up the situation immediately and rapidly, or to expose herself to an ominous change for the worse.

Nor was it yet certain how the position would develop with regard to England. There was no longer any doubt in Berlin that if war broke out the English Government would side with our enemies. The attempts to secure the neutrality of Great Britain, either by guaranteeing the neutrality of France through England's mediation, or by promising under all circumstances not to demand any surrender of territory from France, had proved a failure. The maintenance of peace on the Continent was no longer feasible. At the most there was still a possibility that Parliament might not sanction the Government's policy.

But Grey had long and carefully considered this possibility and had taken his measures. As it was doubtful if the majority would consent to enter the struggle on behalf of Serbia, Russia, and France, if England's interests were not involved, it was necessary to convince the English people that their own interests were imperilled and England's honour at stake. The Belgian question met this need.

It had long been an open secret that in the event of war with France the German General Staff contemplated marching through Belgium. As a matter of fact this was an integral item in Schlieffen's plan. Owing to the strong fortifications on the comparatively short Franco-German frontier, this seemed the only possible way of dealing France rapid and decisive blows. It is useless to worry at this time of day as to whether this hypothesis was correct, or whether a more rapid and energetic attack on the French fortresses might not have compelled surrender, as in the case of the Belgian ones ; whether it might not have been wiser to transfer the main burden of the offensive to the east and keep France on the defensive, as was actually thought of for one fleeting moment at the very end. The plan was now sanctioned as the basis of the operations and the entire disposition of the troops founded upon it.

Long before the outbreak of the war the German Foreign Office can hardly have had any doubt about this plan. It is therefore all the more astonishing that no careful and detailed preparations had been made in advance to bring about and justify this unusual and alarming step. Were the authorities in Berlin not sufficiently informed as to the previous history and significance of Belgian neutrality, or had they reasons of their own for not using what they knew? So far these questions have received no reply.

There is no doubt that the old treaties of 1818, which were renewed in 1831 during the negotiations for Belgian neutrality, stipulated in certain events for the right of entry for Germany in the east and England in the west. It certainly was not absolutely clear under what conditions it might be exercised. In any case, in 1831 such a right had been thought compatible with neutrality. It is also the case that in 1870 the English Government was of the opinion that Belgian neutrality, as guaranteed by the Great Powers, offered no complete security against the passage of foreign troops. Otherwise it would have been unnecessary to conclude special treaties at that date with Germany and France excluding the entry into Belgium in the impending struggle and binding England to declare war against any Power which violated the Belgian frontier. It is well known that Gladstone afterwards in the English Parliament maintained the point of view, which was not disputed, that the old treaties were not sufficient to preserve Belgium from the fate of becoming the battle-ground of a new war. Neither France nor England had any scruples about contemplating the occupation of Belgian territory in their earlier war plans. The Belgians had once already been threatened with having an English army disembarked on their shores against their will. These older plans had evidently been allowed to lapse simply in order to justify in public estimation the powerful argument that Germany alone had infringed Belgian neutrality.

In Berlin in 1914 no use was made of these arguments; they took up the standpoint that the march through Belgium was a breach of the treaty, an illegal start that only necessity could justify. Bethmann evidently, in his inmost heart, disliked the task of initiating the necessary diplomatic preliminaries ; but he could not refuse, for the General Staff would not have allowed their whole plan of operations to be overthrown at the last hour.

In London they were tolerably certain that Belgian neutrality would be violated. It seemed not improbable that Germany, when victorious, would completely annex Belgium and establish herself on the coast of Flanders. It was easy to alarm the English public with this possibility and induce the mood desired by the Government. But apart from that, Grey, in contradistinction to Gladstone's earlier attitude, was able to represent Belgian neutrality in a way which excluded every use of Belgian territory by the armed forces of the belligerent Powers. England's guarantee was thereby stamped with the impress of a legal and moral obligation to defend Belgium against such an event, by force of arms if necessary. Already at the end of July Grey had brought up the question of Belgium at Berlin. On the 31st he laid the question officially before France and Germany—whether both Powers would bind themselves to respect Belgian neutrality so long as it was not violated by the other side ? France immediately replied assenting. This Germany in her plight could not do. Herr von Jagow, the Secretary of State, returned an evasive answer. On the following day Grey told Lichnowsky that he deplored this conduct as Germany's attitude would strongly influence England's final decision. He refused Lichnowsky's request that England should remain neutral in the event of Germany agreeing to respect Belgian territory.

On August 2nd Germany delivered a declaration in Brussels intimating that the German troops were compelled to enter Belgian territory in order to ward off the impending advance of the French from the south, of which there was reliable information. No hostility, it was further stated, was thereby intended towards Belgium, and if she remained neutral the integrity of the kingdom and its immediate evacuation on the conclusion of peace would be guaranteed. As is well known, Belgium declined these terms, whereupon Germany declared that the invasion would be carried through notwithstanding (August 4th). In

London they were explicitly told that in the event of war with Belgium the integrity of Belgian territory would remain guaranteed when peace was concluded.

In his speech on August 3rd in the House of Commons Sir Edward Grey stated that England was not pledged to intervene in a European war. But England's honour and interest demanded that the German fleet be not allowed to attack the northern coasts of France, as France, relying on her good relations with Great Britain, had concentrated her own fleet in the Mediterranean; likewise Belgian neutrality must be defended in the event of its being attacked. He referred to the events of 1870, but without mentioning the crux of the matter, namely, that at that date it had been considered necessary to conclude special treaties with Germany and France. Germany's assurances for the future he passed over with the remark that Belgium's independence would be lost in any case if she was compelled to allow the German troops to march through her, and he outlined the spectre of the complete inclusion of Belgium, Holland, and Denmark within the German sphere of influence. He also was silent on the fact that Germany had offered to guarantee the integrity of France whatever happened, and had requested England herself to formulate the conditions under which she was prepared to remain neutral; nor was mention made of the fact that England likewise had refused to promise her neutrality even if the Belgian frontiers were not infringed.

All this shows plainly that Grey had already made up his mind and intended to mould the feeling in Parliament to his opinion. He carried the majority with him. Those who were in favour of remaining neutral obtained only a small following. Within the Cabinet Grey met with opposition, three Ministers resigning because they were not in favour of his policy. Henceforward Grey could feel secure of having Parliament at his back if he declared war on Germany on account of the violation of Belgian neutrality.

On August 4th he instructed the English Ambassador in Berlin to repeat the question regarding Belgium, and if a satisfactory answer had not been received by midnight, to demand his passports. As the desired answer was not forthcoming—German troops having meanwhile entered Belgium—the English declaration of war was handed in that evening. The Imperial Chancellor received it with deep and painful emotion, beholding in it the ruin of the policy which he had been pursuing for five years past. Yet it is scarcely possible that he could still in these last few days have expected any other attitude on Grey's part.

The Belgian question certainly played a conspicuous part in the English declaration of war, in so far as it was responsible for inducing a warlike mood in the peace-loving section of the nation and of Parliament, and in the case of Britain that was far and away the majority. But no one who knows the antecedent events can believe that it exerted a decisive influence on the attitude of the English Government. Grey and the majority of his colleagues would have been on the side of France and Russia even though we had not marched through Belgium. It is only doubtful if they would then have been as sure of the consent of the country and of Parliament as in fact they were.

In reviewing the critical days from July 23rd till August 4th, we see unrolling before us a drama in three acts. The first act contains the Austrian demand to Serbia, Serbia's reply, the departure of the Austrian Ambassador from Belgrade, Serbia's mobilisation and Austria's partial mobilisation. Meanwhile there were several attempts at mediation by the other Powers which proved fruitless. Germany endeavours to localise the conflict and believes that Russia will not face the responsibility of a world war for the sake of Serbia, especially as public opinion is everywhere not unfavourable to Austria. It is hoped in Berlin that Austria will act promptly, and practically settle the question before Russia can intervene; and it is sought to prevent the question being brought before the tribunal of Europe. It is recognised that a great war is menacing in the background. But that had been the case in 1908 and also in 1912, yet eventually the opponents had not risked the appeal to arms. It is hoped that there will be a peaceful issue if Austria acts promptly and Germany unflinchingly covers her rear.

The second act begins with the Serbian reply on July 27th and the general revulsion of feeling against Austria. Russia arms secretly and then orders the mobilisation of her southern corps. England sends a warning; Austria declares she cannot be ready to act before the middle of August; Italy and Roumania are uncertain. Berlin now feels doubtful; it is feared that Austria will be regarded as the aggressor if she does not consent to negotiate, and the conviction grows that Russia means to attack. Pressure is now put upon Austria to open negotiations again with Russia, to accept the English proposal for mediation, and to content herself with some small spectacular success in Serbia. Austria proves obstinate, and only yields after sharp pressure. She declares herself willing to discuss the Serbian answer with Russia. It is the last hope for a peaceful solution of the crisis.

The third act opens with the Russian general mobilisation on July 31st. Now Berlin recognises that war is inevitable. Now, in view of the immensity of the danger, she feels it essential that, if she has to fight, the advantages of her superior military preparations and more rapid movement shall not be lost. While the hopeless attempt is being made to get England to remain neutral Germany herself mobilises, and finally declares war on Russia and France so as to avoid allowing her enemies to fix the time for beginning hostilities. This she does although she must now fear that she will be denounced by all the world as the aggressor. The invasion of Belgium is begun, and it is thereby rendered easier for the English Cabinet, with the consent of Parliament and people, to declare war on Germany.

The fatal error of German policy lay in believing that, as in previous cases, Russia would allow herself to be restrained from attacking by a stern display of Austro-German solidarity. We were still trusting to the efficacy of old recipes which had once been of use, but had no effect now when the malady had gone so much deeper. Sufficient allowance had not been made in our political calculations for the advance meanwhile in military strength and for the increase of the war party in France and Russia. Furthermore, it was thought that Austria would be regarded by the rest of the world, more or less impartially, as involved in an unavoidable defence of her vital interests and would therefore enjoy their sympathy. Previous experience ought to have instructed us sufficiently as to Austria's methods of procedure. Nevertheless, we neglected to see to it that by tying Vienna down firmly to Germany's consent for special measures we prevented the possibility of anything happening that allowed our ally to appear as the aggressor, and feeling generally to turn against the Danube Monarchy.

In the events of these last days nothing surprises us so much as the fact that our diplomacy had not long beforehand thought out quietly and prepared the steps that would be necessary. One would think that the conduct to be pursued towards Russia, France, Belgium, and England in such circumstances might have been planned during peaceful times; that the directions for our Ambassadors, indeed even the outline for the Chancellor's speech to the Reichstag, might have been prepared long in advance, as was actually the case with the military dispositions and the deploying of the troops. For many years past we had known—and in 1901 we had ourselves emphasised the fact in our intercourse with England—that the Great War, if it ever came about, would be kindled by the Austro-Russian friction in the East. That being so, would it not have been pertinent to ask ourselves the question, What are we to do if Russia arms but does not attack immediately? Or if France hesitates and thereby threatens to render our plan of operations impossible? What reasons are we to offer for the march through Belgium, which has long been intended? How shall we prepare public opinion for this step? All this should and could have been carefully worked out in collaboration with the General Staff. In the feverish excitement of the critical days there was neither time nor quiet to do it adequately and prudently. These heavy sins of omission stand out even more glaringly when we remember that no preparation was made for mobilising our economic life. In August, 1914, Germany was armed and equipped for military purposes as our exposed position required us always to be; but even when the position began to be critical nothing whatever was done in the immediate application of her military resources. Many obvious precautionary measures were long neglected. From a diplomatic and economic point of view, practically no preparations had been made for war.

It seems to me that for all this there is only one explanation. Until the beginning of the last act there was no real belief in Berlin in the probability of a general war. Often as this dread spectre had reared its head, it had been banished by the hope that no Government would risk laying the fuse to the powder-barrel, and for the sake of some dispute on a comparatively minor matter, would expose the economic and cultural life of Europe—and especially of its own country—to utter destruction. We did not know enough about the others and we were too prone to attribute to them our own mentality, perhaps a characteristic German failing. Because our statesmen knew that they themselves would never undertake the responsibility of a great war for the satisfaction of any momentary advantage, they took the same attitude for granted not only with the English but also with French and Russian politicians. They did this, although there was no lack of warnings from our diplomatic representatives.

It seems to me that the faults and precipitancies of these last days and the lack of any well-considered plan of campaign show more clearly than anything else that neither the Kaiser nor his responsible counsellors believed seriously in the immediate probability of a world war. Those who meet a great catastrophe thus unprepared scarcely can have feared it in real earnest, certainly cannot have willed it, manifestly cannot have striven for it.

# XIX. CONCLUSION

We have followed a broad and winding path. From the point we have now reached let us look back once more over the whole course.

German policy since Bismarck's fall may be divided roughly, I consider, into two distinct periods. The first ends with the failure of the Anglo-German and Russo-German negotiations for alliance, about the year 1905; the second period begins with the building of the Entente, about 1907; and between lies a brief but important period of the re-grouping of the Powers. The first of these periods offers a marked contrast to Bismarck's time in the strong impulse towards colonial expansion, the inevitable result of the great economic and industrial developments.

The purely European aspect of German policy comes to an end and the world policy begins. It was only natural that, under these changed conditions, the exclusively Continental character of our policy in the earlier period could no longer be maintained. Bismarck himself would have admitted this; indeed he had already done so in the 'eighties, in turning to a colonial policy. But there is no doubt about it that for him the security of our European position would always have remained the paramount consideration, and that he would never have allowed the acquisition of new territory in some distant corner of the globe to usurp a decisive influence on our national policy. His aim was to develop our position in the world with the utmost prudence and persistence, without endangering the security of the empire itself. This was all the more difficult owing to the fact that, since the 'eighties, the partitioning of the world had proceeded at a much more rapid rate, with the result that the effort to get as much as possible of what still remained amounted almost to a mania among all the colonial

Powers, so that each new acquisition was apt to create fresh sources of friction and conflict.

Bismarck had foreseen that the development of our colonial empire could not be safely undertaken by us without serious risk unless we remained permanently on good terms with England, the greatest of the naval and colonial Powers. The situation in Europe was sufficiently grave. The old antagonism between Germany and France had been strengthened by the Franco-Russian *rapprochement* until it had become a permanent source of danger. The Austro-Russian friction in the Near East might at any moment lead to a rupture which would involve both Germany and France. So long as a conflict of this kind was limited to Europe we could, in co-operation with our allies in the Triple Alliance, anticipate the result with confidence. But if there were any lasting alienation from England, and the Island Empire joined the side of our enemies, the danger would be immeasurably increased, especially as Italy's co-operation with us would then be highly improbable.

The spirit underlying Bismarck's policy was to pursue the development of our colonial empire according to a steadfast and clearly defined plan, and in co-operation with England, each new step to be dependent on the general political situation. In view of the increased danger of friction owing to the expansion of our spheres of interest and power, it would have been only prudent to build up in good time a new system of alliances no longer purely European, as an insurance against international dangers. But after Bismarck's time our statesmen followed no definite plan, such as the idea of a self-contained colonial empire in some part or other of the wide world. They were actuated only by a general desire not to be left out when the other Great Powers were partitioning the surface of the earth, and to get something for Germany wherever anything was going. This in itself was a fresh source of friction and produced widespread irritation and a feeling of uncertainty as to Germany's real intentions, which appeared incomprehensible and were therefore suspected of being unbounded and dangerous. This policy of compensations, whose chief exponent was Herr von Holstein, constantly led to more or less violent disagreements with England, France and Russia.

The general situation at first was on the whole favourable to

Germany. The Franco-Russian Entente and the British Empire were confronting one another in a hostile spirit in various parts of the world. Both groups courted us, and we could regard ourselves as not only assured against temporary dangers but almost for the time being as the arbiters of the world. As head of the Triple Alliance we represented a third factor of equal importance. This feeling increased our self-confidence and led us often to exceed the limits of good judgment and good taste in our manner of speech and behaviour. In this way we frequently offended the sensibilities of others without having the justification that some vital interest of ours was concerned, or that some valuable object was at stake. For any good services we rendered we were always demanding payment in compensations which, owing to their insignificance, were not worth the bad feeling they roused.

A union of the two groups of Powers against us we thought impossible, and we imagined that we could maintain our valuable central position and exploit it for our own advantage. The English offer of an alliance we answered by imposing conditions unacceptable to the Island Empire. We fancied that once they had learned across the Channel that an understanding with France and Russia would cost too much they would return to us, instead of which France and England accommodated themselves to one another at our expense.

On the other hand, there was the attractive idea of a Continental League against England. When British statesmen began to draw nearer to France, and Russia was heavily engaged in the Far East, we sought to reach our ends by the Björkö Treaty, in the hope that France would join this alliance either voluntarily or of necessity. But immediately after the conclusion of peace with Japan, Russia evaded the task of carrying out this unpleasant duty so as to avoid risking her advantageous relationship to France, and consequently she was gradually drawn within the sphere of the Western Powers.

The days of the pendulum policy were over. We had neglected to form an alliance with England at the time when she wanted us, and now, too late, we recognised that the idea of a Continental League was an impracticable Utopia.

What we had thought impossible now came to pass ; Russia and England composed their old standing differences, and after 1907 we were no longer faced by two groups hostile to one another, but by an Entente bloc constantly becoming more solid. Here began the second period.

We were now oppressed by the consciousness that we were forced on to the defensive, as we were to learn in Morocco and again in the Balkans. We might perhaps have succeeded in breaking up the Entente had we come to an understanding on naval matters as England wished. We did not do so, because at that time we did not feel sure of England's political attitude, and we did not wish to lessen for ourselves the value of an important weapon of defence. In spite of the changed conditions in international affairs we still adhered to our old theory of compensations, which was now much more difficult to carry out. From time to time we sought to stifle the growing consciousness of the dangers of our position by loud-sounding words and references to our powerful armaments, thereby stimulating afresh the feeling of suspicion and distrust.

Even the Triple Alliance itself began to loosen. Italy had gradually been drawing nearer to France and refused under any circumstances to act in opposition to England. Roumania was still uncertain. In view of our increasing isolation the alliance with Austria remained the last bulwark of our position. The more they observed at Vienna that we feared nothing so much as losing our last ally, the more they sought to exploit the position in order to carry out their own Balkan plans. We dared not refuse to cover the rear for Austria, even when she acted without our sanction and when we disapproved of her course of action. So it was that we protected her in 1908 and 1909 at the time of her advance in Bosnia (of which we disapproved), and thereby we injured our relations with Russia. During the Balkan Wars we occasionally held back, but in important matters we upheld the standpoint of Vienna. The leadership of the Triple Alliance gradually shifted to Vienna, which was all the more ominous as Austrian policy in the Balkans was fumbling and uncertain and dominated by its fear of the disintegrating effects of the agitation for a greater Serbia and the necessity for immediate successes; and in its desire for an alliance with Bulgaria, while retaining Roumania, it was pursuing an impossible goal.

The crime of Sarajevo brought out the Vienna plan for a final reckoning with Serbia. It was thought that the only way to save the threatened existence of the Monarchy was to give proof to the world of its vitality by administering an exemplary chastisement to this dangerous neighbour. We thought that we ought not to hold Austria back, and we hoped by the old methods to prevent Russia from intervening. We underestimated the dangers of that policy, and were ourselves obsessed by the feeling that if the great reckoning must come it was perhaps as well it should come now and for this cause. So we landed ourselves in a plight from which, after our vain efforts at the last moment to extricate Austria, there was no longer any outlet but war.

German policy during these years has earned many and heavy reproaches. It can justly be accused of short-sightedness, lack of method, want of forethought and of understanding of the psychology of other peoples ; we can blame Germany's vacillation and her sudden recklessness, as in the Morocco question, for instance. But no one can maintain with any show of reason that at any given time she either wished for war or strove to bring it about. Had Germany really wanted war, no more favourable time could have been found than during and after the Russo-Japanese War. Russia was then incapable of action, France and England inadequately equipped, and the Entente only recently founded. Had we wanted a preventive war all the chances were in our favour then and up till 1909. The General Staff, as in duty bound, had called attention to that fact. But this possibility was never seriously entertained by our Government, and even in 1909, when Austria was considering an invasion of Serbia, it worked consistently for peace. Perhaps it would have been wiser to attack boldly then, but that was not done because of the desire not to break the peace unless compelled. In spite of all the sounding words that have been spoken, our policy was, in fact, too anxious and too peace-loving rather than too militant. We never wanted to win at the expense of others, but only and always to share with them and alongside of them in the apportioning of the earth.

Can as much be said of the other Powers concerned ?

As regards England, so far as we can learn from the sources at present available, no one in England really wanted war. The view so widely held in Germany that Britain engineered the war in order to destroy our economic competition, which was becoming increasingly dangerous to her, has little justification. But across the Channel they did fear our growing political and military power; they felt their own supremacy and security threatened by the growth of our battle fleet, and they credited us with the intention of seizing the hegemony of the Continent of Europe. In order to secure themselves against such possibilities and to prevent us from occupying permanently the position of arbiter, the Entente was founded when the alliance with Germany failed. English statesmen intended it to be a means of maintaining the balance of power and of keeping Germany's might and ambition within due bounds; there is no indication that it was originally intended as an instrument of war. Undoubtedly in London at the outset they underestimated the danger of dividing Europe into two hostile leagues. When they did realise it, they sought to get into touch again with Germany without surrendering the Entente, and so in a manner to recover their supremacy over the parties. But they were by that time too closely bound to the one group, and they had not the power to direct the policy of their allies entirely in the path which they desired. As they were convinced that in a war in which England took no part Germany would be victorious and become master of Europe, they were forced, if the war could not be prevented, to take sides with France and Russia; otherwise they would be faced by the very situation to escape which the Entente had been founded. So it was that England too was ultimately dependent on the decision of her allies, without wishing it, and without clearly realising it. The fact that Grey himself felt bound to the Entente policy was naturally of great significance. But at the critical moment he might have been turned out of office. England's decisions did not depend on him alone; they were dictated by the consequences of her previous policy and by the fear of an increase of Germany's power. England's policy was not so far-sighted as to be able to see clearly the dangers threatening in such a distant future. The overthrow of Germany and the collapse of Russia and Austria have created a French hegemony on the Continent more irksome and dangerous for England than any results entailed by a German victory. It is possible that nowadays there are many in England who in their secret hearts deplore the policy of the Grey era.

With France and Russia the case was quite different. I do not doubt that the great body of the people even in these two countries was desirous of peace. In the ruling circles, both in Paris and St. Petersburg, there were two parties; the one wanted peace if it could be maintained consistently with honour, the other wanted war. In France the latter combined with those who cherished the idea of *revanche*, which had never died out. Poincaré and Delcassé were its great protagonists. Since the brush with Germany in Morocco and the founding of the Entente, this party had greatly strengthened its influence; and finally, with Poincaré as leader it had assumed the real management of affairs. In Russia the Czar was the head of the peace party; for a long time the war party was without any real leader. Wide military circles and all those who favoured Pan-Slav ideas supported the war party at St. Petersburg. In Iswolski, after his personal reverse in the Bosnian crisis, they found a zealous champion. As Ambassador in Paris, this vain and vengeful man fell wholly under the sway of the Delcassé and Poincaré group and rendered it the greatest service by his personal influence. His despatches from Paris, the publication of which in a German translation has now been completed, show clearly to anyone who is not blinded by prejudice, by what cautious and subtle methods Iswolski, in conjunction with Poincaré, prepared for the war. He knew how to get rid of refractory elements like Georges Louis, the French Ambassador in St. Petersburg, how to bribe the press and make use of it, and how to exploit the insatiable vanity of Poincaré. It is really difficult to say which of the two led and which followed. There is no doubt as to their close co-operation. Iswolski cannot repeat too often what good luck it is that Poincaré, and not some other less reliable and less skilful politician, stands at the head of France.

So far as guilt can be brought home to individual personalities in the world war, these two men stand convicted. For long years they had prepared the soil by persistent and deliberate effort, always careful not to let their real aims appear, but to wait for the time when the armaments were completed and when one of the opposing Powers, through some indiscretion, offered the possibility of being made to appear the aggressor; for that was necessary not only to win over the opinion of the masses in both countries, but also out of consideration for England, with her cautious Government and peace-loving people. But the aims which these groups pursued could not be achieved without war. The French wished to recover Alsace-Lorraine from the Germans; the Russians wished to open the way to the Straits and to the control of the Balkans, and they wished to free the Slavs from the German, Austrian and Turkish domination under which they had hitherto lived, and to absorb them within their own sphere of influence. It was they, not Germany, who wished for conquests at the expense of others.

The clever and unscrupulous tunnelling operations of these comparatively small groups prepared the way for the World War. Their leaders were not daunted by the hideous consequences of such a struggle of the nations, for without it they could not reach their goal. They were already waiting their opportunity during the Balkan Wars, and in July, 1914, they seized it gladly. The Russian mobilisation, which was the immediate cause of the war, was their work.

Unfortunately we possessed no statesman who was competent to deal with these clever and unscrupulous diplomatists. Austria's rashness and Germany's timid consideration for her last ally gave them the opportunity which they wanted, and they used it with consummate skill.

I have purposely confined myself in all these considerations to the inter-relation of the immediate causes of the war, but I cannot close the book without referring briefly to the deeper reasons for this great catastrophe.

The rapid partitioning of Africa and of the South Sea Islands among the European Powers, from about 1880 onwards, created an atmosphere of acute political tension. This was further accentuated after 1895, when it seemed as if the process of dismemberment were to be applied in the Far East and to the territory of Turkey. So long as there was land to dispose of, a policy of compensations served as a safety valve and prevented explosions. But the narrower the available space became, the more stiffly the valve worked and the more it creaked. America's intervention in the Far East and Japan's accession to the dignity of a Great Power, practically closed the whole of eastern Asia against dismemberment for a long time to come. After 1900 the territory of Africa had all been allotted as far as Morocco and Abyssinia. The competition among the Powers was now concentrated on Morocco and the Turkish Empire.

Underlying these international and colonial rivalries lay the powerful economic interests of the leading industrial and commercial nations, each of them anxious to get as large a field as possible for the sale of its goods, and to secure productive sources for the supply of raw materials, and political privileges to ensure remunerative investment for its capital.

Alongside these new international antagonisms there remained the old enmities between the Continental Powers. The greatest of these was the Franco-German rivalry symbolised in Alsace-Lorraine, and the struggle between Austria-Hungary and Russia for the leading position in the Balkans.

Yet underneath these European antagonisms there lay a deeper difficulty. It was the discord which increased throughout the nineteenth century between the State frontiers as settled of old, or as established by treaty, and the principle of nationality, established with such conquering power by the French Revolution. Neither in Eastern Europe, nor in the Balkans, nor between France and Germany, did the boundaries of the States correspond with those of population and language. Austria-Hungary and Turkey were States belonging to an earlier stage of development. They had been created without any regard to the nationality and the wish of the human beings composing them, and they were only maintained with difficulty by the pressure of circumstances. Germany, too, in the north-east, was ruling a large foreign population, and, in 1871, she had absorbed within her empire a French-speaking territory, even if according to its character and to the majority of its inhabitants, it was a national entity in itself.

If the principle of nationality remained the foundation of European States—during these last decades it had grown greatly in strength and significance—these anachronistic States belonging to an earlier generation had to be broken up and removed. Nothing could save them from this fate. When Germany, not realising this position, bound up her destiny with that of Austria-Hungary and for a long time supported the effort to maintain and strengthen the Turkish Empire, she committed a gross and disastrous mistake from the point of view of historical development. She linked up her fresh and vigorous national strength with the corrupt remnant of a decaying empire doomed to destruction, and was thereby involved in its ruin. The maintenance of the Danube Monarchy, as a barrier against the flooding of south-eastern Europe by Slav races under Russian leadership, was certainly part of the traditions of the Bismarck School; yet how often Bismarck himself warned us against letting ourselves be pushed into the flames for the expansion of Austria's interests in the Balkans! And that is precisely what happened. In his *Thoughts and Recollections* Bismarck says:

> "The Triple Alliance is a strategical position which was advisable in view of the dangers threatening at the time of its conclusion, and feasible under the prevailing circumstances . . . it would be unwise to regard it as a safe basis for all possibilities; the conditions, requirements, and opinions, through which it was brought about, being liable to change in the future . . . It does not dispense with the '*Toujours en vedette*!'"

In the memorandum of May 9th, 1888, drawn up for the Kaiser, then Prince Wilhelm, he goes on to say that if our relations with Russia should break down and Austria be left as our only prop against Russia and France, the Hapsburg Monarchy would then acquire an influence over the German Empire such as we removed in 1866. "The security of our relations with Austria rests mainly on the possibility that, if Austria proves unduly exacting, we can come to an understanding with Russia." By exalting into an inviolable dogma the necessity for the Triple Alliance and for the maintenance of the Danube Monarchy, our statesmen were acting contrary to the spirit of Bismarck and of all sound policy, and robbed themselves of the freedom of movement indispensable for the development of our system of alliances.

Under the totally changed conditions after 1879 it would have been more advantageous for our future development and probably, in spite of difficulties, an equally practicable road, to have gathered all our fellow-Germans in the Danubian kingdom into the German Empire, to the exclusion of all foreign populations which were not absolutely necessary for the maintenance of a compact and defensible territory, and thereby to have given the German Empire not only a more extensive but, most important of all, a firmer basis, one resting on the unity of nationality.

This is the path for our future, which we must now tread under much harder conditions than would have prevailed only a generation ago. But we hope, by pursuing it, in the end to reach the goal which a great nation of marked individuality and unexhausted strength must always keep before it—the dwelling together of those of the same nationality and the same culture, and the welding of them into a political unity, free to develop itself without threatening the neighbouring nations; but also without being under their tutelage or exploited by them.

# APPENDIX

## VISCOUNT GREY'S MEMOIRS

Lord Grey's Memoirs, bearing the title, *Twenty-Five Years, 1892-1916*, appeared while this book was in the press. It is naturally of the greatest interest to hear from the man who stood at the head of English policy in the decade before the War, by what motives he was actuated in making important decisions, and what aims he was pursuing.

Grey tells us that his whole political outlook was determined by the years from 1892 to 1895, during which he was Under Secretary of State in Lord Rosebery's Ministry. At that time England more or less co-operated with the Triple Alliance, without being formally bound to it, while her relations with France and Russia were very strained and dangerous. At any moment some perfectly insignificant dispute in China, Further India, or Central Africa might lead to war with one if not both of these Powers. Grey describes the manner in which Germany exploited this situation; how, for instance, she supported Great Britain in the Egyptian question, but then demanded in anything but a friendly tone immediate help in return. It is the results of Herr von Holstein's policy of compensations which are here described from the English point of view. Grey felt the position in which England was thus placed to be so dangerous and so ignoble that even then he fervently desired to withdraw from it. When, therefore, during the subsequent years in which he was not in office, Lord Lansdowne and his colleagues, after the failure of the negotiations for an alliance with Germany, concluded the Entente with France and began to approach Russia, Grey welcomed this turn of affairs with deep satisfaction. When at the end of 1905 he found himself at the head of the Foreign Office, he was determined to continue at all costs the policy of an understanding with France and Russia, and to resign rather than allow that situation to re-establish itself, under the pressure of which he had suffered so severely before. I have no doubt that the key to Grey's policy is to be found in these experiences and in the temper of mind which they induced.

He then goes on to say that he had never felt any enmity towards Germany and never wished to provoke a war against Germany. As to the latter point I believe him unreservedly, and had already expressed in this book, before I read his Memoirs, my conviction that Grey did not desire the war, but on the contrary did all he could, up to the decisive days of July 1914, to avoid it. But the first part of his assertion I cannot accept so unreservedly. He may not have been fully conscious of it himself, but his whole book bears witness that Germany was to him an unknown and unsympathetic land. He draws a distorted picture of German ways of life and political thought, a picture not, indeed, invented by him, but one considered true to life in many quarters outside Germany even before the war and still more during it. He sees the policy of Germany as governed by a greed for power which no moral considerations could touch, and its goal as the hegemony of Europe and, ultimately, a struggle with England for the lordship of the world. Anyone who has lived in Germany during the last few decades or has studied the utterances of public opinion, which is not represented by a few prejudiced writers, knows that this hypothesis is not true, either of the German people or of the German Government. This question, however, I will not argue here ; I only wish to emphasise the fact that long before the War Grey was impregnated with this view of Germany, and that his conviction has influenced his political attitude more strongly than, perhaps, he is himself aware. For at critical moments our feelings are apt to carry us away more vehemently than our understanding either approves of or will admit to be the case.

Grey never doubted, indeed, that if war were unavoidable England would have to side with France and Russia. He states in detail the reasons why it would have been impossible to remain neutral, and one cannot deny a certain weight to his arguments It is true that he always avoided giving Russia or France a distinct promise of help ; but can he never have admitted to himself that his whole attitude towards these Powers must have led them to believe that in case of trouble England would be on their side, even though no definite promise of the kind had been given?

And this brings me to the point which makes me pause. It is certain that Grey intends to speak the truth wherever he is describing particular events, or setting forth his motives at particular important moments, and that he is then always most objective, calm, and controlled, and does not attack those who hold other views. He entirely avoids any sort of real misrepresentation in his accounts of particular matters of fact. He always holds fast to the view that in each step he took he was guided by the desire to maintain peace. And thus we get the picture of a very prudent and conscientious statesman who in spite of all efforts could not achieve his true aim, the preservation of peace. Grey himself says that afterwards, in sleepless nights, he turned over and over in his mind, what more he could have done to prevent the outbreak of war, and he comes to the conclusion that nothing would have served, since Germany was resolved to go to war.

Let us, leaving this last point for the moment, put to ourselves the question: Can Grey really have been so naive a statesman as he depicts himself? We learn from him that when he took office he was told that regular conversations had been instituted between the highest military authorities of France and England, on the subject of the co-operation of the armies and fleets if the two countries had to fight together. He gave his approval to these consultations and allowed them to continue without, as he says, troubling himself about the details of what was said in them, since he considered them perfectly harmless. The Government had always reserved to itself the decision, whether the conditions of concerted action were or were not present, and that was all that mattered. Can such an experienced and clever statesman as Lord Grey really not have felt then, and not understand even now, that there is a kind of moral binding force between men as between States, which operates even without written agreements? And that such a moral binding force is involved when the leading statesman of one country not only allows his military colleagues to concert common plans of action with the military authorities of another country, but even agrees that the peace-time dispositions of the respective fleets shall be determined by the assumption that in case of war the one country's fleet (here England's) will protect the threatened coasts of the other country ?

Our doubts become even graver when we learn that Grey had always been convinced that the *revanche* idea had entirely disappeared in France, and that the leading men in France and Russia desired nothing but peace and security against a German attack. We know now from the Russian archives that this was *not* so ; we know that Poincaré and Iswolski waited for years for the psychological moment when they could represent their countries to the world as the victims of aggression, and so incline English public opinion to support them. For they realised that at such a crisis Grey would have to consider public opinion and the Parliamentary majority ; and they realised that these two forces would hardly be won over for a war of aggression. That Poincaré would see war come without regret had been recognised by Count Benckendorff during the Balkan War. Grey does not seem even now to have read any of the correspondence of Iswolski or of the other documents dating from the last years before the War, which throw light upon these suppressed reasons. This is remarkable in anyone who is writing on the events of these years. Grey might say : I wished to describe only my actions and motives, and therefore I could build only on such evidence as was known to me *at that time* ; the documents published later could not influence me then, because I had no knowledge of them ; and so, as I was writing memoirs and not history, I could ignore them. Even if we are ready to admit that this point of view can be defended, it still seems to me inconceivable that Grey could at the time have so completely deceived himself about the temper of France and the secret operations of Poincaré and Iswolski. Poincaré's name is not even mentioned in Grey's account of the origin of the War ; Iswolski is named once, but the view that he might be partly responsible for the outbreak of the War is rejected with the comment that he had ceased years before the War to be the leader of Russian policy, and that it is well known that an Ambassador has little influence upon the policy of his Government. It surely depends greatly upon the personalities of the Ambassador and of his Chief. Of course Cambon invariably assured the English Minister that France desired peace; but was there not the English Ambassador in Paris to give him better information? And has not a Minister so many unofficial relations that he can get news in such important matters, if he seriously wishes to do so? It seems to me that Grey shut his eyes a little here, in order not to have to see what would be disagreeable and might disturb his policy. For supposing that the goal of French and Russian policy had been plain to him, and in spite of this he had used neither warning nor restraint, would he then have been able to assert that he had done all that was in his power to maintain peace?

What Grey has to say about German policy in the period before the outbreak of war is even more remarkable. He has as good as no knowledge at all of the German documents. True, he cites them on occasion, but he knows nothing at all of the attempts made by the German Government to induce Austria to draw back at the last hour, and to initiate direct negotiations between Vienna and St. Petersburg. On the contrary he expresses the view that the responsible statesmen in Berlin were at the decisive moment thrust aside by the military party, which he thinks was the power that determined German policy; this party, he thinks, had long been preparing the war and had fixed the hour for it in advance. This in itself is remarkable, for no one could foresee that the heir to the Austrian throne would be murdered in this summer; but without this event war would hardly have broken out. Grey does not tell us whom he means by this 'military party.' Perhaps Count Moltke, Chief of the General Staff, who was known to be very peacefully inclined. Or Admiral von Tirpitz? Or whom? No doubt from the moment of decision that war could not be avoided, military considerations strongly influenced the German Government, but this could not be otherwise. That is not the point: Grey's contention is that the very decision, whether or no there should be war, did not rest with those persons apparently responsible, but with the military leaders. In truth there can be no question of this. The measures of policy of those decisive days all issued from the Imperial Chancellor and the Foreign Office without the military authorities ever being consulted. The whole of Grey's representation of the facts not merely stands in contradiction to the original evidence but shows how meagre was his acquaintance with German conditions.

That Grey should repeat the old fairy tales spread abroad in the War about Germany's intention to become master of the world by means of a great war, and about the overwhelming importance of an all powerful military party in Berlin, shows that he has not taken the trouble to become acquainted, so far as is now possible, with what went on outside his own camp ; and to do this is surely as important for a statesman writing his memoirs as for a historian. Grey repeats even the threadbare legend about a war of the liberal Western Powers against the militarism and autocratic rule of the Central Powers, without any consideration of the fact that the Western Powers were allied with Russia, the extremest of all autocratic states, and had entered the war in order to help her. All his utterances show that the historical work of the last few years has left him untouched and that he still moves entirely within those modes of thought which were produced by war-hypnotism.

We can only deeply deplore that one who occupied such an influential position at such a decisive time, and to whose words we should therefore be inclined to attach great weight, should still offer such opinions to the world. All that he contributes to the explanation of English policy during those years—and he contributes many important facts and much that is worthy of attention—cannot diminish the gravity of this consideration. To establish historical truth in certain questions his book can certainly be used with profit ; as a whole, as an attempt to make clear the forces and events which produced the World War, in their operation and cohesion, it is no more than the one-sided expression of opinion of a man who, entangled in long exposed prejudices, instead of enlightening his readers, leads them astray.

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